

Ruths Recompence: p. 3.

1702
OR *Savage 1802*

A COMMENT-
TARIE VPON
THE BOOKE OF
RVTH:

WHEREIN IS SHEWED HER
HAPPY CALLING OUT OF HER OWNE
Country and People, into the fellowship and
society of the Lords Inheritance:

HER VERTVOVS LIFE AND
holy Carriage amongst them:

AND THEN, HER REWARD IN GODS
mercy, being by an honourable Marriage made
a Mother in Israel:

Delinered in severall Sermons, the brieft summe
whereof is now published for the benefit of the
Church of God.

By Richard Bernard, *Preacher of Gods Word at Bat-*
combe in Sommerfet-shire.



LONDON

Printed by *Felix Kyngston*, and are to be sold by
Simon Waterston. 1628.

OR
A COMMENT
UPON

THE ADVICE SHEETED HAS

AND

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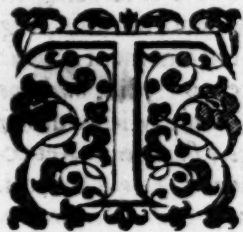
THE ADVICE SHEETED HAS

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TO THE RIGHT
HONOURABLE AND
VERY VERTVOVS LADY,
the Lady FRANCIS, Countesse of
Warwick, Dowager, the increase of all sauing
Graces, and the fruition of that eternall
blisse with the Saints in glory, is hear-
tily wished.

Right Honourable Lady,



Though a Woman was the Mo-
ther of all mans miserie; yet
of a Woman came saluation, to
bring vs out of that estate vn-
to Grace and Glo-y, and for
womens comfort, God of his
mercy hath beene pleased to
make their Sexe renowned in
many examples. To some he hath g.uen supernatu-
rall knowledge, by enduing them with the Spirit of
Prophecie, as Miriam, Deborah, Huldah and An-
nah. Vpon other some he hath bestowed singular wite-
dome, as vpon the woman of Tekoah, and the wise

The Epistle

woman of Abel, in Bethmaacah. Rare was the faith of many, as the faith of Sarah, of Rahab, of the widow of Sarepta, and of the Canaanitish woman; who haue put on better resolutions, and greater courage for the Church in the time of perill, then some men haue done. Did not Deborah encourage Barak to the warres, aduenturing her selfe with him, when otherwise he without her was afraid to go? Did not Iael, the wife of Heber, kill the great Captaine and Generall Sisera? And who more resolved to incorporate her life for Gods people, then beautifull Ester, with her If I perish, I perish?

Haue there not been of them famous in many other things? For attention to the Word, as the Virgin Marie and Lydia. For going farre for knowledge, as the Queene of Sheba to heare the wisdom of Salomon. For workes of charitie, as Dorcas. For workes of piety, helping forward the building of the Tabernacle, as were many women. For seruency in prayer, as Hannah. For daily deuotion in fasting and prayer, as Anna. For entertainment of Gods Messengers, as the Shunamite, as Lydia, and one Mary. For the feare of God, as the Mid-wives of Egypt. For courtesie to a mercie stranger, as Rebecca. For humilitie and patience, as old Naomi. Who can out-strip Ruth in loue? Are there not recorded not meane ones onely, but also honourable personages for Religion and Grace? as wee may reade in the Acts 17.4, 12. Will a Dionysius become a beleuer in an Vniuersitie, from among the Athenians? You shall finde a Damaris to second him.

In what haue men been renowned, wherein some
women

Exod. 35. 21,
23, 29.

Rom. 16. 6.

Dedicatorie.

women (according, yea, and beyond the nature of their Sex) haue not been remarkable in Wisedome, Faith, Charitie, loue of the Word, loue to Gods Messengers, feruent affection, and desire of heauenly things? If men haue suffered imprisonment, cruell persecution, and Bands for Christ, were women behind? No verily, Acts 8.3. & 9.2.

Nay, haue they not in somewhat excelled men sometimes? Who entertained Christ so much, and so often as Martha and Mary? Who are noted to contribute to Christs necessities, but women? Luk. 8.3. Who (sauiug Iohn the Apostle) followed Christ to his Crosse, lamenting and weeping, but women? Who of all the ordinary followers of Christ obserued where Christ was buried, but women? Who first went to his Sepulcher with sweet spices to anoint Christs body, but women? We may reade of a Congregation of women, to whom Saint Paul preached, being gathered together to the accustomed place of prayer, as more forward, as it may seeme at that time, then men.

Luke 24.24.

Mark. 16. 1, 2.

Acts 16. 13.

It would be tedious to repeat by name all the notable women in the holy Scriptures, and their excellent graces; yet cannot let passe Priscilla her knowledge with her husband Aquila in the ministerie of the Gospel, able to teach an eloquent Apollos; nor Loys ana Eunice, Traypers up of the famous Euangelist Timothie in the holy Scriptures; nor Persis, which laboured much in the Lord, as many other women did. Not to stand upon more instances, one thing for their more worthy praises, is to be obserued, and not to bee forgotten; I haue read of men well esteemed of to haue been Apostates, as Demas, Alexander, Phyletus,

Phil. 4. 3.

The Epistle

and others; but of neuer a woman by name, once reckoned among the Saints in all the new Testament; this is singular glorie.

But the Lord hath not thought it enough to honor women thus, by endowing them with excellent gifts, and by their praise-worthy works, but also hee hath graced them otherwise. To whom did Christ first manifest himself after his resurrection, but vnto women? Of what act did euer Christ so speak, to make it perpetually famous, as that of the woman, that powred vpon him an Alabaſter box of oynment, promising that wheresoeuer the Gospell should bee preached in the whole world, there should her worke bee remembered? Hath not also the Lord directed his Penmen, and by name his beloued Apostle, to write an Epistle vnto an Elect Lady? And are there not whole books of Scripture dedicated to their names, as this of Ruth, and the other of Ester, for an eternall remembrance of them?

I hope (Right Honourable Lady) therefore, that I may bee bold to present your Honour with this my Commentary vpon Ruth, which you may challenge of right before all others, for your bountifull and liberall contribution towards my maintenance in the Vniuersitie of Cambridge, by the which I am now that I am; and for which, as also for your Honours euer continuing fauours to mee and mine, I remaine euerlastingly a debtor.

Accept therefore, I humbly beseech your Honour, this my best testimonie of all dutifull services, and of the acknowledgement of my most thankfull remembrance of the same. And my hearty and daily prayer is, that the Lord would blesse your Honor, that as both

you

Dedicatorie.

you haue intended, and also begun good works, so you may goe on with encrease therein to the end; it beeing the greatest honour before God and men, to bee great and rich in good works, for which you shall haue, for the present, many peoples prayers; for the time to come, of mindfull posterities, also great praises; and withall in heauen (which is the best of all) reward with God; who euer preserve your Honour in all happy peace and prosperitie.

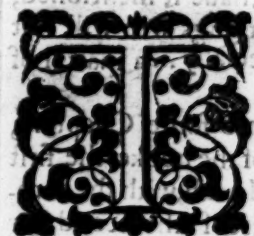
Batcombe,
March 22.

Your Honours euer bounden
to be commanded,

Richard Bernard.



RUTHS *Recompence*:
OR,
A COMMENTARIE
Vpon THE BOOKE OF
RUTH.



He booke of RUTH.] This is the title of this part of Scripture: and hereby is shewed of whom it chiefly intreateth, euen of *Ruth*, the veruious and godly young woman and widow, a Heathen and Idolater by her countrey and birth, but by the Lords call a gracious Saint at length, a mother in Israel, and one of whom Christ came. The titles of the Bookes of holy Writ, shew either the principall matter thereof, as *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leuiticus*, *Numbers*, *Psalmes*, *Prouerbs*, and many other, or who were the Pen-men, as the Bookes of *Samuel*, *Esdras*, or what person chiefly is there spoken of, as *Iob*, *Ester*, *Nehemiah*, and *Ruth* here; who though but a woman, and of that weake sexe, yet
B being

being truly religious, see how the Lord doth her honour to all posterities: a singular encouragement vnto vertue and godlinesse.

Who penned this, is not certaine: but certaine it is by the Genealogie, Chap. 4. 18, 22. that the Scribe liued in *Dauids* time, and therefore is it held to be *Samuels* by some. But it is not necessary euer to know the Penners of euery booke of Scripture, especially of Historicall and Dogmaticall, whose truth and authority depend not vpon the writer or speaker, as Prophetically booke doe, but vpon the veritie of the things spoken, and written. The Scribes name is concealed, the Lords pleasure was not to haue it mentioned, and therefore after hidden things wee will not make further enquirie, especially in a matter of no more moment.

The booke is diuided into foure Chapters, being, as it were, the parts of the booke: the first sheweth *Ruths* iourning to Iudah, with the occasions thereto, and causes thereof: the second, her entertainment; and her carriage and paines there: the third, her contract with *Boaz*, a Noble man of Bethlehem, and how it was procured: and the fourth, her solemne marriage, with the ioyfull issue thereof.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

THis chapter telleth vs how *Ruth* came to Bethlehem, who being married to a mans sonne of Iudah, in her owne countrey, for the grace of Religion in her heart, and the loue shee bare to her mother in law, after the death of her husband and father in law, forsooke her people, countrey, and idolatrie, and went into the Land of Iudah, to dwell with Gods people, and came thither with her mother in law, in the beginning of Barley haruest.

Verse 1. And it came to passe in the dayes when the Iudges ruled, that there was a famine in the Land, and a certaine man of Bethlehem Iudah went to sojourne in the Countrey of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sonnes.

THis verse is an entrance into the Story, and is the description of a iourney: and therein note, when, vpon what occasion, from whence, whither, and who tooke it in hand, and with what company he finished it.

And it came to passe.] To wit, by the hand and providence of God. Thus he beginneth this History, to note a speciall hand of God in all this businesse, beyond mans purpose and thought, in bringing a famine, and in Elimelechs going into Moab, to take a wife for his sonne, euen this Ruth, to make

her a mother in Israel : and therefore are we diligently to marke the providence of God in reading this Storie.

In the dayes when the Iudges ruled.] This telleth vs, when this happened ; In historicall narrations the time with other circumstances are set downe, for more credit to the Story, Iudg. 1. 1. 2. Sam. 1. 1. 1. King. 1. 1. As in humane Stories this is obserued, so here in Diuine. Thus God in mercy descendeth to vs, for the better confirmation of our weake faith, for which hee is to be praised. We may note out of these words :

1. *That the Israelites were euer vnder gouernement, vnder Moses, Ioshua, the Iudges, and then Kings:* this was needefull, to preuent disorder and confusion of State, when men are not vnder rule and gouernement : for then will every one doe what he listeth, Iudg. 18. and 20. Which condemneth Anarchie and all loose liberty, destruction to Church and Common-wealth.

1. *That their gouernement was first by Iudges,* that they might see the Lords extraordinarie hand in this gouerning of them, 1. Sam. 8. 6, 7. and that they might not bee as other Nations, 1. Sam. 8. 5. nor in bondage, 1. Sam. 8. 9, 18. These Iudges were raised vp for the most part extraordinarily, to shew more fully the Lords care of his people, they were worthy and excellent men, not all of the same Tribe and Family, but sometime of one, then of another : they ruled not by tyranny, or the aduice of man, but by the counsell and guidance of God ; They loaded

Iosephus in Antiq. lib. 4. cap. 8. de Aristocratia.

not the people with heauie burthens to maine-
taine great State: In their daies, they sought the
welfare of the people, the glory of God, not their
owne wills and pleasures to rule after their owne
lusts. They would not raigne themselves, but the
Lord, as *Gideon* said, should raigne ouer the
people. Thus happily did the Lord prouide for
his people, till they did shake off his yoake, and
brought themselves into bondage: for so it falleth
out, if men like not of Gods choyce, he leaueth
them to their owne, of which they shall bee sure
to repent.

Iudg. 8. 23.

III. *That such as be set ouer a people, are to rule
them, but yet in iudgement:* for the Hebrew word
translated *Ruled*, is *Iudged*, and Rulers were to
iudge, 1. Sam. 7. 15. And this must they doe, e-
uen labour wisely to rule and gouerne in iudge-
ment. They are to rule, to maintaine their au-
thority, which else will lie, through contempt, in
the dust, and they must doe it in iudgement,
that equitie may be vphe'd, and nothing be done
rashly, partially, and to the hurt of innocencie.

That there was a famine.] This might happen
many waies by the incursion of Forraine ene-
mies, by ciuill warres among themselves, or by
restraint of seasonable showres from heauen:
howsoeuer it came, sinne was the cause thereof:
for wee may reade in the time of these Iudges,
howsoeuer they themselves did valiantly, and
right worthily in Israel, yet the people would
run into many mischiefs, so as we by searching,
may find these euils among them: A toleration

of Idolaters, and publike Monuments of Idolatrie, *Iud.* 1. 21, 27, 29, 30. and 3. 5. and 2. 2. contrary to Gods expresse Commandement by the hand of *Moses*. They sell themselves vnto idolatry, *Ch.* 2. 11, 12, 13, 17. and 8. 27. for but tolerate it in others first, then we like it at length in our selues, as many examples witnesse. They would defend it, and that with bloodshed, *Chap.* 6. 30. for Idolaters are of a murtherous disposition, as their *god-Denill* is, whome they worship, as *Manasses*, *Ioaſh*, *Iehoram*, and other Kings doe manifestly declare, and as wee haue experimentally found at the hands of Papists. See heere a toleration first, then an approbation, then an open defence of an idolatrous worship; and when this is once on foote, what darkenesse doth not ouerspread? They did what themselves listed, *Chap.* 17. 6. and 18. 1. and 21. 25. They fell to adultery, and filthy Sodomity, *Chap.* 19. Thus they forgot the Lords mercies, and therefore he seuerely punished them, as the story of the Iudges shew, in giuing them into the hands of their enemies, grievously to oppresse them; and heere by famine to plague them. From whence we may obserue:

I. *That sins, especially these aforenamed, deserue the Iudgements of God*, *Deut.* 28. 1. *King.* 8. 35, 36, 37. because sinnes prouoke and incense the wrathfull indignation of the Lord against men, as appeareth by his terrible threatnings, *Ps.* 11. 6. *Rom.* 2. and his inflicted punishments vpon euill doers, of which there want not examples in the Scripture: as the old world, Sodom, Israelites
in

in Wildernesse, in Canaan; and therefore to escape plagues, let vs take heede of sinne, Ezech. 18. 31. Reu. 18.

II. *That famine and dearth is a punishment for sinne, and that a great plague,* Ezech. 5. 16. Deut. 28. 23, 24. Leuit. 26. 19, 20. Amos 4. Therefore to auoide it, either preuent sinne, that it bee not committed, or if we be ouertaken, repent of sinne, and that sincerely, and speedily. And when this hand of God commeth vpon vs, let vs search our waies, and let vs humble our selues, 2. Chro. 7. 14. that the Lord may heale our Land: for it is a terrible iudgement, 1. Sam. 24. 14. and without mercy, 2. King. 6. 10, 29. Ezech. 4. 10. This famine men do know: yet there is another Famine, which few know, or if they know it, they feare it not, the famine of the Word, Amos 8. 11. which the Lord threatneth by that Prophet, as a greater plague, than the famine of bread and water, the foode for the body: and yet alas, who feareth it? who are touched with the terrour of this plague?

III. *We may hereby see how God made his word good vpon them, and that he dallyeth not with his people, in denouncing iudgements against them:* for Moses had told them, Deut. 28. that God would thus afflict them, if they would bee rebellious against him: and heere the story telleth vs, that in the daies of the Iudges, this plague of famine came vpon them. This *Ezechiel* verifieth in Chap. 6. 10. and the punishments inflicted, as the Lord denounced them, shewe the truth hereof, that the Lord speaketh seriously; hee doth not iest with

sinners; he will certainly make good vpon them what he threatneth, as may be seene vpon *Iezabel*, *Ely's* sons, and vpon his house, vpon *Ieroboam*, *Ioa-chin*, *Zedechiah*, and on *Ierusalem*. For the Lord is the God that hateth iniquity, and is iust in his Word, euen the God of Truth, as we'll in threats, as in promises: And therefore let vs feare the Lyons roaring, and not be like him that blesseth himselfe, and dreadeth not the curse, *Deu.* 29. 18. but presumeth of mercy, as if God were not also iust to punish offenders. But such must know, they deceiue themselues, they harden their own harts, they abuse Gods mercy, which is to worke feare, *Psal.* 130. 4. *Ier.* 33. 9. and obedience, *Rom.* 12. 1. They spoyle God of his Iustice and Truth in his threats, & incense the Lords wrath to plague them in a high degree, as he threatneth in *Deuteronomie* 29. 19.

In the Land.] In the Land of Canaan, the Kingdome of Israel, where God had placed them, planted them, and promised to them his blessings plentifully: yet see now, for their sinnes, in a Land once flowing with Milke and Honey, *Ezech.* 20. 6. they finde scarcity. Hence note:

1. That people deprive themselues, by their sinnes, of that which God had giuen, and they enioyed, according to his promise. For sinne will deprive Angels of heauen, *Adam* of Paradise, *Cain* of his honour, *Ruben* of his birth-right, thousands of the Land of Canaan, though they came out of Egypt: *Ierusalem* of her Kings, her Temple, Peace and prosperity; men of their honours, as

Ieroboam,

Ieroboam, Haman, of their libertie, as *Manasses*, of health, as *Vzziah*, of their liues, as *Corah* with his company. Let vs then blame our selues for our miseries, and not the Lord for punishing vs, as wee deserue. And if we would hold the blessings which wee doe inioy, beware of sinne, which will robbe vs of all we haue.

I I. *That a fruitfull Land is made barraine for the sinnes of the inhabitants thereof*, Psal. 107. Leu. 26. 19, 20. And these sins in particular procure this plague; The abuse of Gods mercies, Luk. 15. 14. Idolatrie, 1. King. 17. 1. 2. King. 4. 36. The murdering of innocents, 2. Sam. 21. 1. and the oppression of the poore, Amos 4. 1, 6. Know then how to preuent hereby scarcity: and in the time of want, turne from sinne by repentance, and blame not the heauens, or earth: murmure not against vnseasonable weather, but be displeased with our sinfull selues.

I II. *Iudgement begins at the house of the Lord*, 1. Pet. 4. Ezech. 9. hee will shew his hatred of sinne vpon the land of the liuing: for he cannot suffer euill in his people; if a *Moses*, an *Aaron*, a *David*, a *Iosias* sinne, they shall feelee the smart of it. Now therefore if iudgement begin at Gods House, what shall become of Gods enemies? If the Church feelee wrath, what may the Aduersaries expect?

A certaine man of Bethlehem Iudah.] Iudah the Royall Tribe: And this is added for distinction, because there was another Bethlehem in Zebulon, Iosh. 19. 15. This Bethlehem was called Ephra-

Ephrata, Gen. 35. 13. fixe miles from Ierusalem, as some say: here *Iacob* fed his sheepe, Gen. 31. heere *Rachel* died, *David* was borne, and *Ielus* Christ our Lord; It had the name from Plenty, and signifieth the *House of bread*; So as we see, the noble Tribe of *Iudah*, and this honourable place of *Bethlehem* felt this scourge of God. *No place is exempt from the punishment, where sinne is suffered to reigne*: It bringeth famine vpon *Bethlehem Iudah*, and on the Land of *Israel*, it bringeth the sword and famine into *Ierusalem*. There is then no place to keepe vs free from feeling the punishment, if sinne be not remoued: chase out this, and call home againe the Lords blessings.

Went to sojourne.] As a stranger in another Countrey from his owne home. We here see, how God can remoue by one meanes or another, men out of ther homes and harbour. *Dauid*, through iust feare of *Abshalom* out of *Ierusalem*; *Manasses* by force out of his Kingdome into prison: other by vnthriftinesse cast out themselues: some voluntarily leaue their habitation and place of abode, and returne not againe. All which came about by the hand of God, who hath all things at his disposing, that no man may thinke himselfe securely settled; especially if he be a *Shebna*, the Lord will driue such out, *Amos* 4. 2, 3. Note againe, how feare of corporall wants will make men leaue their home, their native soyle, their friends and kindred, to goe into a strange countrey. So forcible is nature for preservation of bodily life, which man so much esteemeth and loueth. This should then
make

make men care to keepe the blessings prouidently, and frugally, also to auoide the occasions and meanes of wastfull misspending, seeing seare of want will thus work. And if the loue of corporall life be so forcible, how much more the loue of eternall life, for which we should be willing to forsake all? But alas, the least worldly gaine, or carnall pleasure banisheth this loue out of many mens hearts, who rather follow here *Elimlech*, to leaue the people of God, to goe into Moab for the world, than *Abraham*, to forsake his Countrie, at the comandement of God.

In the Country of Moab.] This Moab was inhabited by those which came of *Lots* eldest sonne incestuously begotten; of this was *Balak* King, who hyred *Balaam* to curse Israel, who committed fornication with the Daughters thereof, to the destruction of thousands; ouer this Land reigned *Eglon*, who smote Israel, and possessed some part of the Land, and kept them in bondage eigheteene yeeres; some think that *Elimlech* iournied to Moab in his dayes: howsoeuer, by this wee may learne, that *wicked Idolaters may haue sometime plenty, when the people of God are in want.* Here Moab had plenty, when Israel was vnder a famine. Of the prosperity of the wicked, read Psal. 73. 4. & 17. 14. & 37. 15. Iob 21. 7, 13. and of the troubles of the godly, Heb. 11. 37. And this commeth to passe, because the wicked are at home here; here their heaven and time of reioycing: but the godly are not here at home, the Lord looketh for their comming to him, and therefore prepareth them

Gen. 19. 37.
Num. 22. 6.

Iudg. 3. 13.
13, 14.

them by crosses, he loueth them, and therefore doth he correct them, that they might not be damned. Hence then it followeth, that we are not to iudge mens spirituall estates by outward prosperity or aduersitie; for the wicked haue the greatest portion of the things of this life: See it in the parable of the Rich man and *Lazarus*. Why doe men then blesse themselues for their wealth and honour, and despise their poore brethren, in a farre better estate before God than they?

Quest. Whether did Elimelech well to goe from *Bethlehem*, into such an idolatrous country?

Ansiv. It may seeme not, because he went of distrust, rather than of present want, verse 21. and for that he left the place of Gods true worship, and where the Lord promised his blessing, Canaan also being a type of the Kingdome of heauen, to goe among the wicked Idolaters, whom the Lord by name also had forbidden to be receiued vnto his people, Deut. 23. 3. Neh. 13. 1. Further, hereby he could not but endanger his family, to be defiled by idolatrie, if the Lord had not bene more mercifull. And to cōclude this: We see how the Lords taking both him and his sonnes away, may somewhat perswade, that he did not wel, seeing the Lord suffered him not to returne home againe. True it is, that *Dauid* went out of Iudah, vnto Idolaters, for feare of *Saul*, but it was against his will, and with much sorrow of heart. *Abraham*, he traueled into Egypt, but it was at Gods bidding; and the Shunamite might by the Prophets warrant goe into some place out of Israel,

to prevent the misery of famine, 2. Kings 8. 1, 2. But what is this to such as haue no such warrant, but such mouing causes, as here?

Hee, and his wife, and his two sonnes.] This is praise-worthy in him: For *an honest man careth for his wife and children, as well as for himselfe.* *Abraham* tooke his wife with him into Egypt, Gen. 12. 18. *Jacob* all his with him, Gen. 42. for the wife is as himselfe, Gen. 2. and so to be loued, Eph. 5. and the children are bone of his bone. Reason and nature tyed *Elimelech* to this: an example of a louing husband and of a naturall parent to be imitated; and which condemneth those which runne away from wife and children, and are worse than Infidels, 1. Tim. 5. 8. yea than the bruit beasts. This mā led them, they followed him: so wines and children are to be companions with their husbands and parents in aduersitie. *Sarah* will follow *Abraham*, *Rachel* and *Lea* *Jacob* from their country and fathers house; and *Mary* the mother of Iesus will follow *Ioseph*; for the husband is the head, and the bond of law bindeth thē thereto: which checketh the contrarie; if husbands and parents doe command to be followed & obeyed in things lawfull. If *Elimelech*, as it may seeme, did not well to goe, it may be questioned whether these did well to follow him? He might doe amisse, & not they being vnder his gouernmēt, so long as he led them not to doe euill, and to commit idolatrie, but for sustentation of life, & in that country where they were not outwardly compelled to idolatrie, but might serue God, as they had learned at home.

If

If any thinke otherwise either of *Elimelechs* going, or of his company, I contend not.

Verse 2. *And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sonnes, Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem Iudah: and they came into the countrey of Moab, and continued there.*

THe Historiographer goeth on with the former narration of the iourneying: first expressing by name the man, the wife & the sons, shewing plainly who they were: then the finishing of their iourney: and thirdly, their abode there. Into these three things this verse diuideth it selfe, the declaration of their persons what they were called, both in respect of their names, and place whence they came; the perfecting of their iourney, and their stay there.

And the name of the man was Elimelech.] By naming the parties, and not speaking in generall, as before, the holy Ghost would haue notice taken of them, the better either to see their graces, or to discern their wants, and so to haue a more certaine knowledge what to follow, or what to take heed of; for the knowledge of persons maketh the things which they doe, either more or lesse apparent to vs. *Elimelech* signifieth *The Lord my King*: a man well descended, he was of the chiefeſt Tribe; to wit, of Iudah, a nigh kinsman vnto *Boaz* the Lord of Bethlechem, and one of note, as appeareth by the article in the Hebrew, and in the Greeke

Septua-

Septuagint also, as likewise by the notice taken of *Naomi* his wife at her returne, ver. 19. yea he went out of Iudah without want, as may be noted from verse 21. and as learned men from thence doe collect. And if so, his going away was more offeare to want, than present necessities, which sheweth his great weakenesse, worthy reproofe. See here a man well borne, of good meanes, of good note, and carrying a name of trust in God, yet slippt through distrust of Gods providence, & too much relying vpon his owne deuised course, which yet failed him in the end. *Great birth, good meanes, high name and fame saue not from falling either into sinne, or outward misery, if a better blessing than all these be not giuen men from God: and therefore not to rest vpon them.*

And the name of his wife, Naomi. Whose daughter this was, the Scripture recordeth nother name signifieth *My pleasantness, or sweetnesse*: as wiues should be such to their husbands, and so husbands should account them. Shee was faire, a wise woman, of great note in the Citie, and a very godly and meeke-spirited woman, full of true loue, patient in want, thankfull and humble: all which to be true, her words and deedes in this historie doe plainly shewe. So she was faire inward and outward, an example and Looking-glasse for women, the gallant Dames, which would be *Naomies* for outward beauty, and bravery, but are soule *Marahs* for want of grace and true goodnesse. *Naomi* is named before her children, both in the former, as a wife to *Elimelch*, and

and here as a Mother to them: and this reckoning of her name in this order, declareth her dignitie and place before them. Shee as a wife is to haue place next *Elimelech* the husband, who is to preferre wife before children, for shee is himselfe, and as a mother to goe before them that be her children, who are to honour their parents.

And the name of his two sonnes.] Why not her sonnes? for shee was not their mother in law, but they were sonnes borne of her body, verse 11. But they are called his, for the more honour. For the father chiefly giueth honour to the child.

Mablon, and Chilion.] The former signifieth *infirmities*, the latter *finished*. Why so called, is not shewed, but they answer the euent of things; the first, his fathers infirmity, in going from among Gods people, to liue with Idolaters for preseruatiō of his outward estate; and the other, his fathers death, being taken away in Moab, verse 3. He was *Mablon* in his leauing of Bethlehem, and *Chilion* in abyding in Moab. And here note in all these names, how significant they be, which the Hebrewes did euer obserue in naming their children, yea the Lord himselfe in giuing a name to any one; as in calling *Abram*, *Abraham*, *Sarai*, *Sarah*: which is of vs to be imitated, thereby expressing our faith and grace towards God, and admonishing them of some duety. True it is, that good names haue no vertue in them to make men better, nor names without significatiō, to make any worse; yer for reuerence to our holy profession, and that blessed Sacrament of Baptisme,

Baptisme, at which time names be giuen, and in imitation of the godly in Scripture, yea of God himselfe, who called his first Sonne of men, *Adam*, and his blessed holy One, *Iesus*, by the Message of an Angel; let vs giue our children good names, significant, and comely, not absurd, ridiculous and impious, as some haue done, out of the spirit of prophanenesse.

Ephrathites of Bethlehem Iudah.] So termed, because Bethlehem was called Ephrata, Gen. 35. 19. or for that the Countrey where Bethlehem stood, was so called, as may appeare in Mich. 5. 2. and Iudah is added not onely for a distinction of this Bethlehem, from the other in Zabulon, but for to make a difference of the Ephrathites here, from other in the tribe of Ephraim; for *Ieroboam* is called an Ephrathite, 1. King. 11. 26. By which wee see how carefull the holy Ghost is to make cleare the History, and to free it from ambiguity of speech that the truth might better appeare, and not be mistaken. *The Penmen of this and other diuine Histories are Faithfull Historians:* and such should others be, and not full of fables, falsehood and deceit, written through feare, or fauour, or ill will.

And they came into the Countrey of Moab.] So they finished their iourney. Howloeuver the Man might doe amisse in leauing Israel for Moab, the Land of the liuing, for a dead Nation; yet it pleased the Lord to speede his iourney, to bring to passe, what he had intended for the conuersion of *Ruth*, to make her a mother in Israel: whence

we see, that God intending good to some, in his secret counsel, may prosper that, which others undertake, with no good warrant. Thus shall Nebuchadnezzar prosper against Jerusalem; Jacobs sonnes act, in selling Ioseph their brother; yea the enemies of Christ to put him to death, as God had determined, Act. 4. For the Lord can worke good out of euill, and can vse ill instruments to good purposes: And therefore simply for the good issue, which God maketh, we are not to approue of either the matter in hand, or the mindes of men, which God vseth therein, as is apparent in the former examples: for Gods will and worke was one thing, but theirs another: hee is to be praised, but they are to be reprobued. The word *Coun- trey*, may be also translated, the *field*, as in the Originall it is often vsed; and hence some conie- cture that *Elimelech* went not into the Cities of the Moabites, but dwelt in Tents, as did *Abra- ham*, *Isaac*, and *Iacob*, and not in the Cities of the Canaanites. *If men liue where Idolaters be, it is good to auoid the occasion of infection as much as may be.* For much conuersing breedeth familiarity: this, loue of their persons, & so a liking of their waies, with neglect of true Religion at the first, but it falleth into contempt at last. It is rare to bee a righteous hearted *Lot* in Sodom, he was but one, and one alone; Israelites became Idolaters in E- gypt. This is it which made the Lord forbid communion and marriages to them, with the Canaanites, lest they should learne their wayes. Let vs therefore take heede of conuersing with the

שרה Gen. 25.
Num. 20. 17.
Pro. 24. 3.
Septuaginta ונקל

the wicked, and with idolatrous people: It is good that idle Trauellers should consider well hereof.

And continued there.] So then they had no repulse, but were allowed to dwell there, and that for a long time, as the words in verse 4. doe shew: yet these Moabites were formerly hard-hearted enough, Deut. 23. 3. but by this we see, *that none are so churlish and unkinde at one time to some, but God can incline their hearts at another time to other some.* The History of Heathen Emperours manifesteth the truth of this towards Christians; and the Story of the Israelites, comming forth of Egypt: for mens hearts, yea the hearts of Kings, are in the Lords hands, to turne them towards whom he pleaseth, as *Nehemiah* knew well, which made him to pray: and *Iacob* also, when he feared the comming of *Esau*. When wee haue to doe with ill and dogged natured men, let vs goe to God, who can turne *Esaus* bloody heart, in his comming forth, into a kind welcomming of his brother at their meeting; he can incline *Assuerus* heart towards *Ester*, to make him hold out to her the golden Scepter. Consider the promise, Jer. 15 11. and 41. 12. & let vs seeke to please God, and hee will worke vs fauour in the eyes of men, Pro. 16. 7. and Iob 5. 23. let this be our comfort. It may further seeme by the course of this Story, that these Bethlehemites were not onely suffered to dwell among the Moabites, but also that they were kindly vsed, in that they would be content to marry with them, which is a commendation to

Nehemiah 1.

them, that would thus welcome such, as came among them for succour. *It is a matter praise-worthy to be harboursome to strangers*; for this were the Barbarians commended, Act. 28. 2, 7, 10. who received the Apostle and the rest into their houses, made them fires because of the cold and raine in Winter, courteously lodged them, and when they departed, being such as had suffered shipwracke, and were thereby in want, those Barbarians helped them with necessaries. This was humanity and mercy; For this, *Abraham*, and *Lot*, and *Iob* are commended; and this goodnesse wee must learne to practise, for so are wee exhorted, Heb. 13. 2 and these former examples lead vs to it. This dutie is to be done, not onely to our kindred, to our friends, to our knowne countrymen, but to strangers, Heb. 13. 2. yea and to our enemies in their neede, 2. Kings 6: 23. Romanes 12. 20.

Verf. 3. *And Elimelech Naomies husband dyed, and shee was left, and her two sonnes.*

THis telleth vs of the heauie crosse which befell *Naomi*, which was in the death of her husband, and that, as it may seeme, very shortly after they were come into Moab, before the sonnes did marry: so she was left a widdow, with two fatherlesse children, to take care for them in a strange country. This verse is a narration of an euent, what it was, and vpon whom it fell, to the great heauinesse of *Naomi*: the euent was death,

death, and here is shewed whom it tooke, and whom it left.

And Elimelech dyed. His age is not reckoned, he could not bee very old, if wee may gesse his yeeres by his sonnes marrying so young women after his death, yet he dyeth, yea and there also, whither he went for food to prelerue life: He went first from Israel, the Land of the liuing, and led them thence, and so he now goeth out of the world before them; from whence note:

I. *That death is the end of all, and it spareth none,* Iosh. 23. 14. Iob 21. 33. Eccles. 7. 2. and 6. 6. 1. Cor. 15. 51. Heb. 9. 27. for all haue sinned, Rom. 5. and death is the reward of sinne, Rom. 6. And therefore let all prepare to die.

II. *That a full supplie of bodily wants cannot preuent death:* The man must die in Moab, where was food enough: the rich Glutton must die also, and the Rich man with his barne full: for the sentence of death is irreuocable, and mans life dependeth not vpon the outward meanes of life, for then the rich and mighty would neuer die.

Let not men in their abundance thinke to escape death: let them therefore not set their hearts on their wealth, for they must leaue it. It is follie to trust in riches, for they cannot deliuer from death, either ordinary, or extraordinary, lingering, or suddaine, naturall, or violent, as examples and experience it selfe teacheth.

III. *That where men think to prelerue life, there they may lose it, as Elimelech doth here, fleeing from the*

famine

famine in Israel, yet dyed where plenty was, in Moab: for no place is free from death, and when the appointed time is come, man cannot passe it, Iob 14. 5. we cannot thinke therefore our selues safe any where from death, nay, many times, where we may think our selues secure, there death may take vs away.

Naomies husband.] It is not said her husband, which might well haue bene spoken, by way of relation to her, without her name, because shee was named before, and no other woman; but this woman was a very vertuous woman, and this was a great crosse to her, and therefore, both to expresse her excellency, and her begun misery, it is said, *Naomies husband* dyed, the husband of so rare a wife died. Note hence,

I. *That it is a grace for some, to be called the husbands of some women;* their name is a grace to them, if they be vertuous: for such a one is a crowne to her husband, Pro. 12. 4. Now, a crowne is high glory to a man: and *her husband* is knowne in the gates, Pro. 31. 23. Such wiues are to bee made much of, as rare Birdes; for too many may sit downe with shame, and blush to bee named the husbands of some wiues: Foolish, though faire: faire, but perhaps filthy: rich, but withal retchlesse: wiues, but without gouernement, husbands named the head, but they must bee masters: sometime painefull, but Peacock-like proud; often more mad, or sullen sad, than merrie; if merrie, it keepe not in with modesty; if she speake, it is lowd, often heard farther, then seene, and yet ofte-

gaue him fauour in the eyes of the Keeper of the Prison, to sugar this bitter pill with. And this the Lord doth in mercy, that his children might not be ouerwhelmed with griefe, and swallowed vp of sorrow: therefore by one meanes he casts them downe, but by another sustaineth them. Let not therefore men, which feare God, bee ouer-sad when afflictions come; God will lay no more then they can beare: he layeth on them a burthen, but he putteth vnder his hand. If wee looke vpon the affliction, let vs also consider, what cause of comfort wee haue; marke when, for what, how long or short, what it is allayed with, that we bee not wholly cast downe.

Verf. 4. And they tooke them wines of the women of Moab, the name of the one was Orpha, and the name of the other Ruth, and they dwelled there about tenne yeeres.

THis sheweth what course the sonnes tooke after their fathers death, they returned not home: this crosse brought them not to thinke of leauing that idolatrous Countrey, but they settled themselues to marry there; so as this verse telleth vs of two things; the first is, of a marriage, and herein who they were, the men, *Elimelchs* sonnes, the women, who are set out by their Countrey, then by their names; the second is, of their abode in Moab, and time how long.

Note (before I come to the words) that *euery crosse bringeth not men home againe*: their fathers death

death made them not resolute to goe backe vnto Gods people againe: *Lot* was taken prisoner, yet would he still abide in Sodom, after his deliuerance. *Iehosaphats* danger with *Achab*, made him not wholly to forsake that house, but he must haue more afflictions, and the Prophet openly to rebuke him. And this commeth for want of waighing the true cause of afflictions, when they happen, or desire to please other, or the loue of this world, or some such corruption of our heart. To bewaile this our peruerse nature not easily reformed, a great affliction must worke on *Mannasses*, great distresse must presse the prodigall sonne, before they will come to themselues, and turne to the Lord, yea some are worse for afflictions, as may be seene in *Achaz*, 2. Chron. 28. 22. in *Amnon*, Chap. 33. 23. in the Antichristians, Reue. 16. 11. and in the Iewes, Ier. 5. 3.

And they tooke them.] This may seeme an act of their owne, as that of *Lamech*, Genesis 4. 19. and that of the sonnes of God, 6. 2. and not their mothers deed, as is said of *Hagar*, Gene. 21. 21. If they did this with her consent, it was as *godly children should doe, to marry with consent of parents*: For parents haue authoritie in this case, 1. Cor. 7. children owe this honour to them. Examples of the godly, as in *Isaac*, and *Iacob*, and *Samson*, moue to it: and the contrary is found fault with, Gen. 6. 2. and in *Esau*; our lawes require it, godly men and learned Diuines so teach out of the Word. Let children therefore herein take aduice of their parents; they shall thrue the better: if they doe well,

ner scene by a quiet husband, then well liked of. In a word, a wicked foolish woman, is shame to his person, and rottenesse to his bones, Pro. 12.4.

II. *That grace in one, preuents not death in another*; *Naomies* husband must die, so *Abrahams* wife also: *Iacob* must bid his *Rachel* adieu, and *Ezechiel* the desire of eyes: for no mans grace can free himselfe, much lesse another from death: Psal. 49. 7, 9. and married persons are not appointed the same length of daies; No, we come not together, and wee goe not together. Let none hope for life by the grace of another; let the nearest, and dearest looke to part by death; *Ruth* loued *Naomi* most dearly, and saith, that nothing should separate them, but onely death, verse 17. because shee knew, that that must needes be yielded vnto.

Ezech. 24. 16.

III. *That it is a great crosse for a woman to lose a good husband*. This is implied, as I said, in naming her by name; for in him the wife loseth her head, her guide, her stay, and comfort, if hee be a vertuous man, and a good husband. I neede not intreat good and louing wiues to mourne for such; sure enough they haue cause: and wiues cannot but mourne, except they conceit a new comfort very quickly, as some doe, for feare the old griefe should lye too long at the heart for him that is dead, and cannot be recalled; so with them, the living is better to be liked of, than the dead: for they know their husbands would, perhaps, haue so dealt with them.

And shee was left and her two sonnes.] Death sea-

zed onely vpon *Elimelech*, and left *Naomi*, and also her sonnès, that she might not be vttierly comfortlesse in a strange countrey. From this may we note these two things :

I. *That albeit death is due to all* (in as much as all haue sinned) *yet it seazeth not vpon all at once*; but one dyeth now, and another hereafter, as we see in all ages, which cometh not to passe for any good in one, more than in another; but God will haue mankind vpon earth till the last day; hee forbearcth some, and repriueth them for their amendment; for the lengthning of life, is for our further repentance, if wee bee the Lords, or for the greater condemnation of such, as shall perish. For this mercy God is to bee praised, for we deserue death, and it might seaze vpon euery one at once, and take vs away, because wee are borne in sinne, brought vp therein, and none so free euer, but in his highest pitch of well-doing, he may be tainted of sinne, 1. Ioh. 1.

2. King. 6. 10.

II. *That the Lord in afflicting his children, sweeteneth the same with some comforts*: he wholly leaueth not them without some taste of his mercy and goodnesse, as we may see in his dealing with *Naomi*: he tooke away her husband, and left two sonnès; and after tooke them away, but gaue her an excellent daughter in Law. *Elisha* had an earthly power comming against him, but he then saw a great help from heauen. It was a bitter affliction for *Ioseph* to be sold of his brethren, but it was sweetened with *Potiphars* fauour; This at length imprisoned him vniustly, but the Lord gaue

well, their parents will reioyce : if otherwise, then children may more boldly seeke to parents for comfort, and expect helpe at their hands.

Wives.] So women be called, when they be married vnto men, or betrothed. It is as if it had beene said, They tooke yong women for wiues to liue in Gods ordinance, and not for wantons, to liue in vncleannesse. Though they were not in Israel, yet they let not loose the vnbrideled lust of nature, but vsed marriage the ordinance of God. So men are to take women as wiues, to liue together in Gods holy ordinance; as the godly haue euer made conscience to doe; and not to liue as brute beasts, to defile themselues; as *Hamor* did *Dinah*, and *Zimri* did *Cozbi*, in the sinne of fornication. From this must we flie, as the Apostle exhorteth, and from other degrees of vncleannesse, as adulterie which God seuerly punished, 2. Sam. 22. 10. Iob 31. 9, 11. so incest, Gen. 19. 36. 1 Cor. 5. 1. 2. Sam. 13. 14. and other vnnaturall pollutions not to be named, Rom. 1. which God giueth reprobate mindes ouer vnto.

Of the women of Moab.] With these they were not to marry, Deut. 7. 3. and 23. 3. Esdras 9. 1, 2. Neh. 13. 23, 25, 26. *Young persons in their choyce soone erre, if they suffer lust to rule, and follow not the Law of God,* Gen. 6. 2. Herein wise *Salomon* was ouertaken, Neh. 13. 26. 1. King. 11. 1. Therefore men are to bridle appetite and lust; and let the Lord rule them, Religion and reason guide them herein. The children of God are not to marry with the daughters of men : it is condemned,

ned, Gen.6.2. the contrary commanded, Deut. 7.3.4. See there the reason, and equity thereof euer, such marriages are not made in the Lord, as they ought, 1. Cor. 7.36, and God hath punished such matches: see in *Salomon*, 1. King. 11. and in *Iehosaphat*, in marrying his sonne to *Athaliah*, 2. Chro. 21. 6. If *Rahab* bee a beleeuer, *Salomon* may take her to wife, & so *Boaz* may marry *Ruth*: and if there were none other to match with in the world, *Abraham* may take one out of another countrey for *Isaac*; and *Iacob* may marry *Labans* daughter: but there is no such want, but that the sonnes of *Abraham* may match with the daughters of *Abraham* now.

The name of the one was Orpha, and the name of the other Ruth.] This was the wife of *Mahlon*, Cha. 4. 10. the elder brother, and *Orpha* the wife of *Chilion* the younger: whether sisters or no, or of what parents they came, is not mentioned. These Heathen people refused not in those daies to match with strangers; *Iethro* giueth his daughter to *Moses*, which must be for his vertue, and not for his wealth; for hee had none, hee was brought vp like a Prince, but he humbled himselfe to keepe Sheepe, and so obtained his wife. *Mens manhood, vertues, and painefulnesse in those dayes got them wives.* *Caleb* will marry his daughter for the mans vertue sake, and valorous spirit; *Saul* will pretend as much towards *David*; but that was pretended in policy, not in truth; *Laban* the worldling will marry his daughters for the world, and sell them for gaine: but a godly man pre-

preferreth grace before goods, and wisdome before the world; though where grace is, if goods may come with it, it is a blessing, and the better to be liked of, for helpe to vphold the burthen of marriage.

And they dwelt there about tenne yeeres.] Whether this time beginneth at their first cōming, or after this marriage, is not certaine, but it is ten yeeres before *Naomi* heares of the Lords visiting of Israel with plenty. It is a long time for a godly woman to bee kept from Gods people, and publike seruice of his name. *Dauid* lamented it much, Psal. 120. 5. and desired the presence of God and his Tabernacle, Psal. 84. 1, 4. In Moab was corporall plenty, but not spirituall; for the one, the other was neglected. Such is our corruption; a comon sinne now, I wish it had not taken possession of the best. But besides this, we may further note, how *a heavy calamity may long rest upon Gods people*: we may reade of a famine, three yeeres and a halfe in *Achabs* daies: three yeeres in *Dauids* time, 2. Sam. 21. 1. 1. King. 17. 1. Luke 4. 25. and seuen yeeres at another time, 2. King. 1. and here also, for a great many of yeeres. And this commeth through mens obstinacie in sinne, and for that such things are not reformed, as God commandeth, or for that some euils are not punished, as they ought to bee; as for innocent blood-shed, 1. Sam. 21. 1. for open idolatrie, and murthering of the Saints, as in *Achabs* dayes. We are in such continuing iudgements, to looke to our waies, and bewaile our sinnes: also seeing thus
Gods

Gods hand against his people so long, wee may learne patience in the yeres of scarcity, and blesse God that neuer thus afflicted vs in any of our remembrances; for such a famine would in these Northerne parts be most intolerable, farre more vn sufferable, than in hot countreyes, where people could humble themselves with fasting, many dayes together.

Verse 5. *And Mahlon and Chilion dyed also both of them, and the woman was left of her two sonnes, and of her husband.*

THis verse sheweth a further griefe which befell good *Naomi*, which was the death of both her sonnes, and so to be left a heauie soule in solitarinesse in a strange countrey, where she could haue no spirituall comfort, and where now she had lost her chiefest corporall comfort.

And Mahlon and Chilion dyed also both of them.] These inioyed their yong wiues for some space, and had time to haue returned home to the Lords people, but they for bodily maintenance, & new friends gotten by their marriages, would not; the Lord therefore tooke them away in this strange Land. Many things may be noted.

I. That the Lord gaue them time to marry, and to enioy their marriage for some space, though they made no better vse of their fathers death: thus *good and patient is God unto men*, for their bettering, if it would be, for which praise him.

II. That when God hath proued men in patience, and they will not make right vse thereof; then will he take them away; for he will not alwaies strue in mercie: here the abusers of Gods goodnesse may learne to take heed.

III. That God can and will cut off sometime yong men in the flowre of their youth. Thus he tooke away Nadab and Abihu, Hophni and Phinces, Amnon & Absalom, two gallant yong Princes: so here these two, though some by violent death, and other by naturall death. And this is sometime a punishment for sinne, Psalme 55. 23. 1. Sa. 2. 31. but not euer: for God in mercie will take some from the euils of the world, as he did Iosias. Let none because of youth put farre off the day of death. Death respecteth no age, no strength, no beauty: Remember thy Creatour in the dayes of thy youth, Ecclesiastes 12. 1. Thy owne sinne may cut thee off in youth, as it did Absalom, and so the rest: or thy fathers sinne, as Dauids child was taken away, 2. Sam. 12. 14. and the tenne Tribes from Rehoboam, and the sonnes of Saul.

1. King. 11. 12.
and 21. 6.

And the woman was left of her two sons, & her husband.] This is added, to aggrauate the affliction of Naomi; and doth teach, that neither few nor light afflictions sometime befall the godly. Naomi lost her husband, then not one, but both her sonnes, and left their widowes without children, so as Naomi had none of his bloud remaining in Moab. And as shee was thus afflicted, so was David, who had proud and scornfull brethren, a bloudily-minded father in law, a mocking Michal to his wife,
lewd

lewd and vnnaturall children; besides many other great trialls. What shall I speake of *Iobs* trialls, *Ieremies* troubles, and *Pauls* persecutions? Yet God thus suffers his to be tried, to make them know themselves, to shew them their graces, and their imperfections, which in affliction they will manifest; to weane them from the world, to the loue of a better life, to whip them from their sinnes, and to make our vile natures tame, to submit to his yoke. Let vs looke therefore for them, let vs be contented and patient vnder them, and consider the troubles of others of old, and in the primitiue Church, and of later times. Let vs not thinke our condition the worse before God, but rather the better, if instruction be with correction; for God loueth vs then. It is a fault to murmur at him, it is an error to thinke our estate to be euill before God, because of sundry and great crosses; for many are the afflictions of the righteous: he saith not, of the wicked, yet then righteous, when they be afflicted: this is comfort against despaire.

Note againe, that he saith, *the woman* was left: he saith not now, *Naomi*, as before & after, to expresse her deiected condition; for a *widow*, *poore*, *alone*, *without friends*, and in a *strange country*, is in an *afflicted estate*, & *conspicuous*: it is she, not *Naomi*, but the woman in distresse and miserie. And lastly obserue, that *when death calleth*, friends must *part*, and one leaue another, husbands their wiues, children their parents, & parents their children; as here, no band of loue can keepe them then together,

geth'r, death must be welcome, and vnto dearest friends we must bid farewell.

Verse. 6. *Then she arose with her daughters in law, that shee might returne from the Countrey of Moab: for shee had heard in the Countrey of Moab, how that the Lord had visited his people in giuing them bread.*

Here is at the length the returne of Naomi, with whom, from whence, and the reason drawing her minde homeward.

Then shee arose.] Shee had long abode in Moab: now after such crosses, shee ariseth to goe thence, vnto the Church and people of God: when the Lord thus afflicted her, when shee saw her selfe destitute of her husband and children, and had none to goe vnto and to conuerse with but Idolaters, the Moabites, then she arose to leaue those coasts. Note, how affliction shall follow affliction, to bring home such as be the Lords: if one crosse will not doe it, another shall, as wee see in the prodigall son, and Gods dealing with Manasses; for the Lord is loth to lose his owne: And therefore if one affliction happen, make good vse thereof, else another shall follow, yea & another after that, till we returne home. Againe marke, that it is then time to leane the place of our abode, when the Godly are taken away, and none left but wicked to conuerse with. Thus and for this cause many left Israel in Ieroboams dayes, 2. Chr. 11. 13, 16. for the godly should delight in the fellow-

D

ship

ship of the godly: *Dauids* delight was in the Saints. It is also dangerous for the Godly to frequent the company of the wicked, as a Lambe to be among Wolves: *David* will not dwell in the tents of the wicked, neither sit among them, Psalme 26. and it is a good mans propertie to auoid them, Psalme 1. 1. And therefore let vs flee the fellowship of Idolaters, 1. Iohn 5. 2 Cor. 6. and the societie of euill persons. For such as can liue with delight among them, are like them, are no true Conuerts to God: and yet not a few, which will be held religious, can make themselues merrie with vaine persons, and condemne others for too Stoicall, too censorious, for that they cannot away with fleshly and carnall delights.

With her daughters in law.] It appeareth that these two did voluntarily accompany her, of their owne minds, and not by *Naomies* intreatie; this appeareth out of verse 8. and 11. What moued them hereto, but *Naomies* vertues? So as we may see, that *the truly vertuous are of an attractive power*, euen as the load-stone, to draw others vnto them, partly by instruction, partly by their godly conuersation. Both which meanes we may thinke shee vsed towards these, while shee abode in Moab: for the religious cannot but incyte others vnto pietie. This is worthie imitation in *Naomi*. If practice shew our Religion, it will win others, 1. Pet. 3. 1. without which, euen the most glorious profession in words, hath no operation, no power to perswade. And here also was a mercy of God to this poore old woman, that shee lost not all outward

outward comfort, shee had some to keepe her company in her aduersitie. It is a good grace, to be content to beare the poore company in a miserable estate; they be true friends, which will sit downe vpon a dunghill with *Iob*, to mourne with him. Well, here were two daughters of *Moab*, which would accompany *Naomi*, poore and afflicted *Naomi*. A reproofe to counterfeit friends, of which now the world is full, neuer more.

That shee might returne from the countrey of Moab.] This is the end why she arose, that is, left the particular place of her dwelling, not to goe into some other place in *Moab*, as hoping of better successe there, but quite to forsake the countrey. The kindnesse receiued there, could not hold her, when she perceiued the Lord to call her home, partly by afflictions in *Moab*, and partly by mercies now in *Israel*. Outward kindnesse of Worldlings cannot keepe the godly with them, when God calleth them away from them, either by afflictions, or by checke of conscience, or by falling into sinne by them, or by feeling the want of the godly, and the vse of Gods publike seruice, or else by seeing or hearing of Gods fauour to his people. When these or such like doe call vpon the godly to come away, they cannot by any worldiy pleasure, profit, or familiar acquaintance, or kinde intertainment stay with such men; they be like *Abrahams* seruant, which could not be held with rest and good cheare, to stay in *Bethuels* house; nor *Dauid* in *Ziklag*, when he had liberty to goe into *Iudah*. For their spirits differ, so as they can-

Gen. 24.

2. Sam. 2. 2.

not truly affect one another, and the godly finde crosses among the wicked, to hunt them out from their societie, and they cannot but feare, in a godly icalousie, to be made the worse by them, for that they know their own weakenesse. And therefore let vs labour for this grace, to leaue the society of the vngodly, lest wee be insnared by them: and if we be with them, let it be by warrant of our calling, or of necessity, and onely so long as we haue hope to doe them good, and to win them; but if they bee found obstinate, forsake them, Ierem. 51.9.

For she had heard in the countrey of Moab.] That is, while she did stay in that countrey, newes was brought of plenty in Israel. As the famine did driue her from thence, so now food being there, and the crosses she found in Moab, mooued her to returne backe againe. *As aduersitie maketh many to leaue the Church, so the prosperity thereof bringeth many vnto it;* some in truth and loue, as *Naomi* heere, others for the world, or for feare, Ester 8.17. Let vs then pray for the Churches prosperity: yet not then are wee to trust all that come within her lappe. Note againe, how *Naomi* in her greatest distresse heard of comfort to her Countrey, to bring her home againe. *God is often the neereſt in mercy to helpe, when in mans reason hee seemeth to be furthest off.* Thus was God with *Iouah* in the Whales belly, and with the three Children in the Furnace, with *Daniel* in the Den, with *Dauid* to helpe against most present danger, 1. Sam. 23.26,27. *Peter*, the very night before his inten-

ded death by *Herod*, must be deliuered; and so the Gunpowder plot here bee discovered. And God thus suffereth his so long, and to come to so narrow a strait, before he set them free, & shew himselfe; to humble them, to beate them out of confidence in themselves, to shew his power and mercy the more, that they may see more fully his goodnesse to them, to make them thankfull, obedient, and the more in utmost perils to rely vpon him. We are not to despaire in the greatest dangers, nor to thinke our selues forgotten in great extremities, but then seeke to God, trust in him, and doubt not of comfort. God will haue *Lazarus* in the graue, before Christ restore him to life, and *Isaac* bound vpon the Altar, before he forbid *Abraham* to slay him. Till the ship be ready to sinke, Christ will not awake, Mat. 8. 25, 26. for so the Lord is more scene in his power, and mercy towards his.

How the Lord had visited his people in giuing them bread. By bread is meant all necessary food, but especially corne, of which bread is made. Here the Lord is made the giuer thereof to the Israelites called his people, whom in mercy hee visited, to bestow his blessings vpon: for so is visited here taken, and in Gen. 21. 1. Luk. 1. 68. Ier. 29. 10. Note from hence these things:

I. That God seeth his people in aduersity and want, and commeth in his due time to helpe them, Exod. 3. 7, 8. which is from his meere mercy, and the stability of his loue and promise to his people: And therefore we may learn patience in affliction,

Pfal. 13. 1.
1. Cor. 10.

and not bee impatient, as if God had forgotten; nor murmure, lest the Lord punish vs.

I I. That *God hath euer had more specially a people for his owne, called his people.* Thus were certaine called the sonnes of God, Gen. 6. Thus after were the Israelites his, Deut. 7. 6. and 26. 18. and such be now true Christians, 1. Pet. 2. 9. Reu. 18. 4. These he chose not for any merit in them, but of his meere loue, Deut. 7. 8 Ephe. 1. 4. This should make vs to examine our selues, how we be Gods people, whether, according to Creation, or after the worke of Regeneration: for these differ from the other greatly, in the graces of Gods Spirit, and holy conuersation, Ezech. 11. 19. and 36. 26, 27. Psal. 15. in glorious titles, Deut. 26. 19. Exo. 19. 6. 1. Pet. 2. 9. Reu. 1. 6. and in heavenly prerogatiues; as in peace with God, Rom. 5. 1. in free accessse, with a holy boldnesse to God in Christ, Heb. 4. in hauing God euer with them, Mat. 18. 20. in this blessing, that all things worke together for the best to them, Rom. 8. and in being a Communion of Saints, to whom is belonging the forgiveness of sinnes, the resurrection of the body, and life euerlasting. Wee are therefore to labour to bee of this sort of Gods people.

I II. That *corporall food, and the necessities of this life are Gods gift,* Leuit. 26. 4, 5. Deut. 11. 14, 15. Hof. 2. 8, 9. Ioel 2. 19. It is he that maketh the earth fruitfull, he giueth raine, and with-holds it, Osea 2. 8, 9. Amos 4. 7. and man without him can doe nothing, Psal. 127. 2. Hag. 1. 6. Deut. 8. 18.

Praise

Praise him for these blessings, Ioe! 2. 26. in the want of them acknowledge it from God, and goe to him, pray to him, Mat. 6. and this must bee done in an humiliation of our selues, for the affliction, 2. Chron. 7. 14. Ioe! 2. 16, 17, 19. If wee looke for these blessings, we are to serue him, because they bee his gift, and to such hath hee promised them, Leuit. 26. 3. Deut. 11. 13, 16. Let this reprocue such as forget God, doe not praise him, nor serue him for these blessings, and let it confute such as ascribe them to the heauens, or to the industry of man, neuer remembring the precept of *Moses*, Deut. 8. 18. and that saying in Iob 31. 26, 27.

Verse 7. *Wherefore shee went forth out of the place where shee was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on their way to returne vnto the Land of Iudab.*

IN the former verse, was *Naomi* her preparation for her iourney; here is her setting forward: noting from whence, with whom, and whither:

Wherefore.] That is, because she heard of plenty in her countrey: which giueth vs this to vnderstand, which before I noted, that *the Churches welfare procureth friends, and draweth her old acquaintance to her:* for prosperity is of an attractive vertue, and men are affected with it; this will make *Abimelech* to seeke to *Isaac*, Gen. 26. 26. and *Iobs* friends gather vnto him, Iob. 42. 11. This should make vs seeke the Churches prosperity;

yea and make men frugall to preserve their estates: for prosperity gets friends (though not a few counterfeit:) and aduersity maketh men to bee forsaken; and yet many which might liue well, bring themselves by prodigality and lewd courses vnto misery: vnworthy they bee of pittie.

Shee departed out of the place where shee was.] In what particular place of Moab shee was in, is not named, though here to bee vnderstood by the name *place*. There was food here, as well as in Iudah, yet shee would not stay though shee was an old woman, hauing poore and weake attendance, the iourney somewhat long for her, her estate wasted, and therefore was shee to returne in a base estate, which other perhaps might cast in her teeth for leauing Iudah, and going into that idolatrous Moab; but all these things did not withhold her from her godly purpose. And two reasons may be giuen for this; the loue of her owne Countrey, and her piety, esteeming highly of the means of saluation. Whence may be noted:

I. That *there is a loue naturally in every one to their owne Countrey*; See it in *Iethro*, Exo. 18. 27. Num. 10. 29, 30. and *Barzillai*, 2. Sam. 19. 27. *Iacob* would returne into Canaan out of Mesopotamia where he had gotten great riches. And this loue vnto their Countrey, made men to aduenture their liues in defence thereof, 2. Sam. 10. 12. Therefore such are vnnaturall, who will seeke the destruction thereof.

II. That *corporall meanes cannot keepe the truly religious*

religious from the place where God is worshipped, if they may enjoy the meanes of life in a poore measure. Naomi would not stay in Moab, though shee in Iudah had nothing to maintaine her, but her hands, and that Ruth must gleane for bread, when they came thither. What a change Moses made, wee all doe know: a crust of bread for the body is better with the food of the soule, than all carnall abundance without it. And therefore if the choyce of our dwelling be, either where bodily plenty is, whithout the Word, or a poore estate for the body, and plentiful instructions for the soules safety, let vs chuse this, rather then the other. Seeke, saith our Sauour, for the food which endureth vnto eternall life, which perisheth not.

Iohn 5.

And her two daughters in law with her.] This their accompanying of her, argueth Naomi her singular good carriage towards them, while her sonnes liued: for if shee had beene proud, forward and vnkind, as some mothers in law haue beene, they would haue despised her, and shaken her off; but we see: first, how good carriage procureth loue: and secondly, how true loue sheweth its selfe in the aduersity of a friend, Pro. 17. 17. for these 2. forsake not poore & old Naomi in this her contemptible estate. Thus Jonathan shewed his loue in Davids trouble; and Iob's friends, when they fate downe by him; for true loue is not tyed to outward respects: such loue is false and hollow-hearted; the loue of these times. We must imitate God in loue, to loue euer, and chiefly in ad-

aduersity; for either loue them, or not at all. Be not as the Shadow which sheweth it selfe only in sunne-shine; nor as the Swallow which chatters, and sings ouer thy chimney in warme Summer, but cannot be seene in Winter. Friends onely in appearance, shape their loue like to the Deuill, who onely maketh a shew of loue to man, and is euer sinister in the intendment.

And they went on their way to returne to Iudah.] It seemeth by this, that the two women came out to returne with *Naomi*, who onely is properly said to returne, because she came out of Iudah, and they had a purpose to goe thorow with her to the end, and to leaue their own native soile, their parents and friends, which was a great degree of loue, but yet we may reade that *Orpha* afterwards gaue ouer. *To begin well, and to make an onset to goodnesse, is easie to many, but to go on to the end, is of speciall grace.* *Cain* began and made an onset to godlinesse, so did *Iosh* King of Iudah. *Iehu* did valiantly for a while. *Iudas* seemed to bee approved by his fellowes, and to liue without suspicion for a time. The same may bee said of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, of *Simon Magus*, of *Demas*, *Hymeneus*, *Alexander*, and *Philetus*, with many moe; but their calling was not effectually: called they were, but not elected: their hearts were full of hypocrisie, which wil at length breake out. Therefore let none thinke well of themselues for faire beginnings, because they that continue to the end, shall onely be saued.

Verse 8. *And Naomi said vnto her two daughters in law, Goe, returne each to her mothers house: the Lord deale kindly with you, as you haue dealt with the dead and with me.*

Naomi seeth their kindnesse, and weighing afore-hand all circumstances, beginneth to make triall of the soundnesse of their loue, and to know vpon what ground it standeth, as appeareth out of the verses 11, 12, 13. The words consist of an exhortation, and a petition to God for them, rendering a reason thereof.

And Naomi said vnto her two daughters in law.] To this place, there is no mention of any speech of *Naomi*, but onely what shee did: First, in following her husband into Moab, verse. 1, 2. and then, of his leauing that Countrey to returne into Iudah, verse. 6, 7. Hitherto her Story is of her walking, and not of her words and talking: it seemeth her tongue did not hang loose, to be vpon euery touch rolling, as some womens be. And this her silence commendeth her vertue therein, and also giueth vs to know, that shee did not sollicite her daughters to go with her, but that they voluntarily vndertooke the iourney: for if shee had requested them, their loue had not so appeared; neither could she haue tried them, by intreating them to returne backe.

Goe and returne.] How farre on the way they were come, is not noted; but on the way they were, before she spake thus to them; which shee did

did not, as carelesse of their sou'es, or of any doubt, whether God would provide for them, who would forsake their country, and become profelytes; but two reasons may be alledged why shee exhorteth them to returne home againe. First was her loue to them, for their kindnesse formerly to her and hers, as appeareth by her prayer, and therefore shee might now seeme to be loth to trouble them, though their company in the way might haue beene comfortable, except shee had knowne certainly how to haue recompenced their loue. Taking this for one, we learne, that *a true Lover is loth to disadvantage a friend or friends for private respects to himselfe*: for true loue seeketh also the good of a friend beloned; and a sound-hearted friend will follow the Apostles aduice, 1. Cor. 10. 24. not seeke his owne, but his friends well-fare. But this alas is contrary to our times, when now men are all for themselves; which selfe-loue is contrarie to Christs commandement, to loue our neighbour as our selues; it is against the communion & fellowship of Christians as members one of another; it is contrary to the end of our labour in our callings, 2. Cor. 12. 14. Eph. 4. 28. which is, to doe good to others; contrary to that care which God cōmandeth, for the preservation of other mens estate, Deut. 22. 2, 4. Exod. 23. 4, 5. contrary to *Abrahams* practice, Gene. 23. 9. whose children we must be, and whose workes we must doe. This selfe-loue is the originall of all bribery, extortion, vsury, deceit, fraud, oppression, and yniust dealings

lings among men; this maketh men enuious, that they cannot reioyce in other mens welfare, and this maketh men without compassion in another mans misery, if they themselues liue at ease: this roote of bitternesse must be rooted out. The second reason was her want of meanes, to giue them comfort in the world, to prouide for them necessities, or conuenient matches, as her words imply in verses 12, 13: shee knew them to haue friends & parents in Moab, but none in Iudah, and therefore shee was loth to make them worse, and to carry them to an vnknowne place, except shee could better haue prouided for them with some certainty. True loue will not make worse, where it cannot make better. But here it may be demanded, *Whether Naomi did well, to perswade them to returne?* I answer, If she had done it in carelesnesse of their soules, or in a coldnesse of religion, shee had offended: but it was partly in her loue to the for their outward estate, not knowing how to pleasure them, if they should take such paines to goe with her, and leaue their owne country, and partly out of her wisdom to trie them, whether indeed they fully resolved to goe with her, let fall out, what might fall out. And this was praiseworthy in her, thus to try their soundnesse: for hereby shee found one rotten at the core, and the other most sound. And thus should wee also doe in these deceitfull dayes, trie before we trust such as offer themselues to come among the godly, as also did our Saviour, Luke 9. 57, 58. lest when they hastily intertaine Religion, they

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as suddainely fall backe to the reproach of the Gospell, and blemish of such as admitted them without tryall. If any aske why shee perswaded them not to stay at home whilst they were there, but to let them goe on the way, and then to will them to returne backe? I answer, It may be that she tooke their comming forth to be of courtesie to take leaue of her, after she had gone somewhat on her iourney; which kindnesse there was no reason to refuse; but perceiuing that they would goe on, shee then fell to make tryall of them, and to vnderstand what might leade them thereto. And this was better done in the way, than at home, to discerne more fully of their resolution. *In the tryall of others it is then best done, when the same may most appeare, this is wisdom.*

Each to her mothers house.] Here is an argument to moue them to returne backe, because they had naturall parents aliue, and shee but a mother in law. Shee trieth them with this first, to see whether nature wrought more then grace. This she knew to be a strong pull-backe, and that nature must first be subdued to follow soundly the course of godlinesse. We must forsake father and mother for the Gospell, saith Christ, yea and deny our selues. If thus we can doe, then are we to be admitted into the fellowship of the faithfull. These words shew, they were not naturall sisters, because *Naomi* willeth each of the to go to her mothers house, as hauing either of them a mother. In that *Naomi* thus speaketh, we may further note:

I. That *of either parent, children are drawne with most*

most affection to their mothers; because all children haue most of their mothers, being conceiued in them, long borne of them, and nursed by them; also, for that mothers are more tender-hearted towards them: and most familiar with them: therefore here is their mothers house named, though afterward *Ruths* father, Chap. 2. 11. And yet some childrē we see ready enough to despise their mothers, which is contrary to nature, contrary to the commandement, Exod. 20. Prou. 1. 8. Yea, it is great ingratitude to requite so the great paines in conception, in bearing, in nursing, which a child can neuer recompence: and therefore a curse is pronounced against such children, Deut. 27. 16. Pro. 20. 20. and of this the Prophet *Ezekiel* complaineth, Chap. 22. 7.

II. That poore widowes are to be maintained of their able parents, when they be left alone, and cannot maintaine themselues, Levit. 22. 13. 1 Tim. 5. 16. The law of nature, and we see, the Law of God leadeth thereto; and *Naomi* knew not whither else to send them: And whither should children goe, but vnto their parents? If this be so, then let parents see to the well matching of their children, to prevent their pouertie if it may be, and a second charge of them. Let children be then ruled of their parents in taking marriage vpon them, seeing parents are to be troubled againe with them, if need require. Yea and let husbands haue care, when they haue receiued their wiues portions, so to husband the same, that they may leaue them to liue after them, and not to be againe charge-

chargeable to their friends.

The Lord deale kindly with you.] Her prayer for them, which was her best recompence for their loue, being now poore, and not otherwise able to requite them their kindnesse. Note hence,

I. That it is a duty to pray for those which doe either vs, or ours good: So doth Naomi here; so Boaz for Ruth, Chap. 2. 12. David for Abigails good counsell, 1. Sam. 25. 33. and Saul for Davids sparing his life, 1. Sam. 24. 19. And this duty lets vs performe, as Christ in the forme of Prayer hath taught vs, Mat. 6. and not pray onely for our selues, as worldlings doe, nor to thinke a fauour done, is requited with I thanke you onely, and that prayer for a blessing vpon them is not required, especially if they be superiours: and yet we see here the practice of superiours to inferiours.

II. That at parting, friends are to pray one for another; as we may see the practice of it in Isaac, Gen. 28. 1, 3. Laban, Gen. 31. 55. Jacob, Gen. 43. 14. and in Paul, Aët. 20. 36. It is very Christian like, an argument of loue, and desire of their owne welfare, which cannot be without Gods protection: put this therefore into practice. True it is, that men now doe it, but it is not with that reuerence, nor exprest with that earnest desire, as is meet and befitting in such a case.

III. That the godly are perswaded, that the Lord is a mercifull Rewarder of the duties of loue, which one doth towards another. This Naomi her prayer to God for them here teacheth: for the godly know, that the Lord hath commanded such duties; and what

what he commandeth to be done, that will hee reward in the doer. And hereof let vs bee well perswaded, this wil make vs do our duties cheerefully, though men requite not our paines, because God will. By this reason Saint *Paul* encourageth seruants to their duties, and to doe what they ought heartily, Col. 3. 24.

IV. That children should so well deserue of parents, yea though but parents in law, as they may bee moued heartily to pray for them: as *Naomi* doth in this place. A good carriage is a duty towards all, then much more to parents; and the prayers of parents is a meanes to put a blessing vpon their children. But some children are so farre from doing their duties to their parents to procure a blessing, as they with *Cham* deserue a curse; such a one was rebellious *Absalom*, bloody *Cain*: such a one was *Ruben*, *Simeon* and *Leui*, whom the Lord punished.

V. That God will not onely barely reward, but so deale with vs, as wee deale with others. This *Naomi* begges for, this the Lord in mercy will doe, Mat. 7. 2. for our incouragement to well doing, he will reward vs according to our works. This should stirre vs vp to doe our duties vnto our brethren, knowing that as we doe, we shall be done vnto.

As yee haue dealt with the dead and with mee.]

Here *Naomi* acknowledgeth their louing obedience and good carriage towards their husbands when they were aliue, and now to her, they being dead: and this maketh her to pray thus for them.

E

Note

Note here, first, that *daughters of a bad race, may prooue good wiues, and good children in law sometime*: as these daughters of Idolaters did; when God restraineth nature, and giueth grace withall. For many times there are tr. stable and gentle natures, where Religion is not grafted, these by good instruction, and Gods blessing, may proue excellent wiues. Children therefore are not euer to bee censured according to their parents; though it is dangerous to graft in a bad stocke: for an hundred to one, but a *Michol* will make a *David* know that shee is a *Sauls* daughter. But here, women Christians are taught to shew themselves good wiues and children, or else these daughters of the Heathen will condemne them, whom *Naomi* commendeth for good wiues. Now, to bee a good wife, a woman must know her duty, and be very desirous to doe it, which stands in loue vnfeigned, in feare to offend, in cheerefull obedience, in meekenesse of spirit, and in sympathizing with her husband in prosperity and aduersity. But where is the woman? where is this *Sarah*, this *Rebeccah*? Shee will answer perhaps, Where there is an *Abraham*, and an *Isaac*; for a good husband will make a good wife; a good *Iohn*, a good *Ioane*: the body will obey, where the head knoweth how to rule well.

II. That good and truly louing wiues loue their husbands parents for their husbands sake, as these did *Naomi*. For the wife and husband are one, and should be of one heart, and the one loue, where

Ephes. 5. 22.
Col. 3. 18.
1. Pet. 3.

vvhere the other liketh: and a good vvife striveth to please and content her husband, in shevv-ing loue to his friends. Shee vvill not bee like such levvd vvives, vvomen not vvorthy to bee vvives, vvhich hate their husbands kindred, and brovv-beate them out of their houses.

Verse 9. *The Lord grant you, that you may find rest each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lift up their voice and wept.*

Nao*mi* her continuing in prayer for them, as before in generall, now in particular for a speciall blessing. This verse containeth a petition, an act of a valediction, and the passion which is wrought.

The Lord grant you, that you may find rest each of you in the house of her husband. Shee prayeth here for their second marriage, and that the same might be blessed of the Lord, the chief Marriage-maker, so as it might procure them rest, and be a quiet contented marriage to their comfort. Note hence:

I. That godly and wise friends pray not onely in generall, but in particular, as they know them to stand in neede, for whom they doe pray: as here Nao*mi* for good husbands for her daughters in law; for wee should take notice of our friends wants, and so pray for them, and not rest in generals.

II. Godly mothers in law are hearty well-wishers to their children in law, whether they bee such by a

former husband departed, or by another husband living, or by the marriage of their children, as *Naomi* is here mother to these: for the loue they beare to their husbands, and because godly women know themselves to bee Stepmothers, stept in to be in stead of naturall mothers, and therefore doe make conscience to supply their want: which if it be so, or ought to be so, it reprobeth those Stepdames, which are vnkind and cruell to their children in law, and cannot endure the sight of them.

III. That *second Marriages be lawfull*, 1. Tim. 5. 11, 14. The reason is given by the Apostle, 1. Cor. 7. 9, 36. Which confuteth such heretikes as in former times haue denied this, contrary to the Apostles Doctrine, and the example of *Abraham*, in marrying *Keturah*.

IV. That *husbands are to bee their wiues rest*, Chap. 3. 1. and they are so called, because of the desire of women to marry, and because they seeke rest in their marriage, and for that louing wiues take rest and contentment in their owne husbands, who ought therefore to be rest vnto them, which shall bee if they doe loue them, as they ought, Ephe. 5. 22. if they wisely gouerne them, 1. Pet. 3. 7. if they prouide and allow them what is meete, according to their abilitie, in all decencie and honest contentment; if they keepe their faith plight, and reioyce in them, and with them, they cannot but find rest. But vnloving and fierce natures, *Lamech*-like husbands, a word and a blow, or terrible threats: miserable and nig-
gardly

gantly *Nabals*, so prodigall and vnthrifty, drunken or adulterous husbands are so farre from being poore womens rest, as they make them weary of their liues. But now if husbands must bee their wiues rest, and that they looke for it, then wiues must care to make their husbands so to them, by willing obedience, by meekenesse of spirit, very acceptable to God, 1. Pet. 3. 4. by seeking to please them, by speaking to them in a louing reuerence, and to keepe silence, when words may offend, or not doe good, as wife *Abigail* did, by a wise frugall course, and good hufwifery, as the woman in the Prouerbs, Chap. 31. Speake not foolishly, as *Iobs* wife, to thy husband in his griefe, nor mock him not, like a barren *Michol*, nor abuse him not, as *Putiphar's* wife would haue done her husband, nor be impatient for not hauing thine own will, as *Rachel* was, but rest in his will, and thou shalt finde him thy rest. Here is also an vse for parents to match so their daughters, as they may get husbands as rests for them; and this will be, when they marry their daughters becoming, to men of wisdom, fit for yeeres, not vnfit for birth and estate, well agreeing in qualities and good conditions, and in religion.

V. That it is Gods blessing to bee peaceably married, Pro. 18. 22 and 19. 14. He is the Marriage-maker, whosoever are the meanes; and he is the disposer and framer of their hearts one to another: therefore let God herein be sought vnto, and let him receiue praises and thanks for

such a blessing, the greatest corporall comfort in this world.

Then shee kissed them.] This action we may find, foure-fold; *Carnall*, as in fleshly lust, *Hypocriticall*, as was *Joabs* and *Judas* kisse; *Holy*, of which the Apostle speakes, 1. Cor. 16. 20. or *Ciuill*, as here. This was vsed at the meeting of friends, Gen. 29. 11. and 33. 4. at their departing, Gen. 31. 55. 2. Sam. 19. 39. Act. 20. 37. This was vsed betweene men, and men, Gen. 45. 15. Exod. 4. 27. 2. Sam. 19. 39. betweene women and women, as here in this place, and betweene some men, and some sort of women, as betweene husband and wife in meeting and departing, parents and children, and nigh kinsfolke, Gen. 29. 11. but not strangers, nor others not of kindred, to auoid the suspicion of wantonnesse. It was honestly vsed, to testifie loue and vnitie, as *Isaac* did to *Jacob*, Gen. 27. 26. & therefore in the Primitive Church, before they received the Sacrament, they thus saluted one another.

1st Apol. 2.
Reason 2. Cor.
13.

And they lift up their voice and wept.] Here was an answerable affection to the kindnesse of her action; her signe of loue, was not without loue againe to her: for it was not a few silent teares from the eyes, but a passion of the heart, breaking forth into wailing and weeping; so as their voice of mourning was heard. An argument of loue and true affection towards her. This is rare loue betweene mothers in law, and daughters in law, in these daies. But concerning weeping, it is vsed in Scripture:

I. To

I. To expresse sorrow, as at the parting of friends, *Ioseph* at his fathers departing, *Abraham* at *Sarahs*, *Ioash* at *Elishas*, 2. King. 13. 14. and when friends must leaue one another, though death separate them not; as when *Jonathan* and *Dauid* parted, 1. Sam. 20. 41. And who can but weepe, if true loue be there, when friends must bid adieu one to another, and especially for euer, as we may see in *Acts* 20. 37?

II. For very ioy, as *Iosephs* sight of his brethren, Gen. 45. 14. and so *Iacob* at *Iosephs* coming to him, Gen. 46. 29. so did *Iacob* in meeting with *Rachel*, Gen. 29. 11. Such true louing natures haue beene in the godly in former times; but now men are louers of themselues, without naturall affection, 1. Tim. 3.

III. In pittie and compassion, from a mercifull heart, to behold the miseries of others, as *Iob* did for the poore, Chap. 30. 25. *Esay* for the people, Chap. 22. 4. so *Jeremy*, Chap. 4. 19. and 9. 1. and 13. 17. *Christ Iesus* for the Iewes, Luke 19. 41. This is a charitable & a holy weeping, when men can weepe for the miseries of other, corporall, but chiefly spirituall, as *Dauid* did, because men kept not Gods Law, Psal. 119.

IV. Sometime some will weepe in the apprehension of the kindnesse shewed to them, where none but vermost extremity is deserued, 1. Sam. 24. 16. Now, if *Dauids* forbearing of *Saul*, wrought in *Saul* this passion: how should we be moued to consider of *Christs* loue to vs, and our cruelty against him?

Verse 10. *And they said vnto her, Surely wee will returne with thee vnto thy people.*

Before was noted their affection; here is set downe their resolution, which was to accompany her, and also how farre.

And they said vnto her.] All this while they heard her, they accompanied her, but no mention of any speech hitherto made vnto her; but now necessity compelleth them to breake silence. Which though it be a speciall iewell in women, who are too tongue-ripe, yet sometime necessity enforceth them. If this might bee the onely key to make them speake, they then speaking, were worthy attention, if withall they would speake in wisdom, and within compasse, knowing when againe to keepe silence.

Surely we will returne.] That is, dissuade vs not thus to leaue thee; for we are resolved to go with thee in this thy returne home. Where note, that an earnest affection suffereth not easily a separation from the party affected. For the truth of this, see it in any sort of loue, as in carnall loue, betweene *Samson* and *Dalilah*, Iudg. 16. In naturall, betweene *Dauid* and *Absalom*. In friendly loue, betweene *Jonathan* and *Dauid*: and *Mephibosheth* to *Dauid* also. In Christian loue, as in *Paul* to the Iewes, Rom. 9. 13. and in *Moses* to the Israelites: and in Diuine loue, as of Gods to vs, and of blessed Martyrs towards God againe. In all these what pro-uocations vvere there to breake off, except it bee in

in Gods behalfe towards vs, who offereth no occasion to make vs leaue him? yet where affection is settled, there will hardly be a separation: for true loue liueth in the party beloued, and can no more forsake him, then himselfe. It is also full of patience to put vp wrongs, and taketh euery thing in the best part, and hopeth of better in the worst things. Let vs hereby try our loue, which is euer with peace and vnity; for where discord is, there is no loue. Such then are hollow-hearted friends; which professe loue, and yet vpon euery trifle breake out into manifest signes of hatred.

With thee. As if they had said, Though thou beest our mother in law, and art but one, and a poore woman; yet thy grace and vertue is such, as wee are content to forsake our countrey, and carnall kindred for thee; with thee will we therefore goe. And indeede it is better to haue the company of one sound Christian, than to enioy the fellowship of a world of worldlings. Good Iouathan took more delight in one David, than in the society of all his fathers house: for the fellowship of the godly is comfortable, and very ioyous to the soule of such as bee godly; but the company of worldlings vaine and vnfruitfull to God-ward. The godly are worthy to bee affected, and loued, they be the children of the most High, and the world is not worthy of them, no not when they be in the most basest condition in the iudgement of men, Heb. 11. 38. And the godly are such as with whom God is for euer, who goe the way to eternall

nall life, which whosoever looketh for, must keepe them company thither. And therefore let vs ioyne our selues to them, sit downe with them, delight in them, Psal. 101.6. and 16.3. and 119. 63,79. and auoid others, Prou. 23.1. Psal. 26.4, 5. and 101.3,4,7,8.

Vnto thy people.] Thus they call the people of Israel, Gods people, and Gods Church, to shew, that *there is a right in euery particular member to the Church, as in the Church to euery member, and all to Christ, and Christ to them*, 1. Cor. 12. 12. For the Church is as a body, whereof Christ is the head, and euery one, one anothers members. We may therefore clayme a right in one another, to care for, and watch ouer one another; wee may clayme a right in all the Churches Rites and diuine Ordinances of God belonging thereto, for our saluation: and therefore should euery member care for the preservation of the whole, and the whole for euery member, and take their wrongs to heart. Lastly, note out of this Verse, that both the women, in their passion, speake the same thing; but yet, vpon more deliberation, one of them calleth backe her word. By which wee may see, that *in passionate affection more will be spoken than acted*: as wee may here see in Orpha her promise; in Saul also, 1. Sam. 24. 16, 17. and 26. 21. and in Dauids heat of spirit, 1. Sam. 25. 32. For passion causeth men to speake vnadvisedly, and more than they would, if they did consider thereof; yea, in passion men are not themselves, neither can the hypocrisie of the heart be discerned,

ned, no, not of the parties themselves at the present instant of time, which maketh such to speake better than they either can or will do afterwards; as appeareth here in *Orpha*, and in *Saul*. Wee are not to vallow words vttered in passion, nor to regard them, either to aduantage our selues, or to harme the speaker, as many doe, who catch men in their sudden speeches, sometime to gaine by them, sometime to trouble them. This ought not to be; Charitie would teach better things.

Verse 11. *And Naomi said, Turne againe, my daughters: Why will you goe with me? Are there yet more sonnes in my wombe, that they may bee your husbands?*

N *Naomis* reply vnto their speech, and second triall of them: wherein is an Exhortation, and a double Interrogation; the first mouing to a more serious examination of their resolution; and the second, a reason of her continued Exhortation.

And Naomi said.] She maketh a second essay vpon them, though shee saw their passion, and heard their resolution; for shee knew, that a sound triall is not made at once. Wee see *Orpha* withstood the first, and made as good a shew as *Ruth*, both in her teares and talke: yet soone after shee gaue ouer. With these faire onsets Satan was well acquainted; and therefore both with *Iob* and Christ, though he preuailed not at the first, yet hoped to overcome at the last. Constancie standeth not in

in one act; neither is therein to bee discerned: And therefore let none thinke they haue sufficient triall of any, because they haue made once an essay with them, in any matter; neither let any man thinke that he hath done valiantly, because he hath resisted a temptation once, and could not be overcome: for thou maiest be set vpon againe and againe; and if after many, thou beeest overcome, thou hast lost thy glory in the rest.

Turne againe, my daughters. Of the exhortation before in the 8. verse. Here *Naomi* kindly calleth them her Daughters, which she might doe, both for her ancientnesse in yeeres, and also for that she was their mother by marriage. This is a terme of loue, which here shee doth expresse, to shew that her exhortation came not for want of loue, but euen in loue she did it, as before is noted, and as appeareth plainly in the last words of the verse. And herein is a point of Godly discretion, which is, that in giuing counsell to or fro, it is good so to speake, as may declare loue and respect to the parties, as shee doth here: *Abigail* to *Dauid*, *Rebecca* to *Moses*, yea and *Lot* to the very abominable *Sodomites*; because the manifesting of loue in aduising, exhorting, admonishing, or reprouing, doth make way in the heart of the party aduised & reproued, and the contrary shuts vp mens hearts and eares, as experience doth shew. And therefore in such cases let vs shew loue, by vsing good and louing termes, by protesting our true affection, if so neede require, by giuing good reasons thereof, that may fully shew it, and by being

ing ready to doe them good, offering them to doe it, if there shall be occasion of it. Note more, that *it was a custome among the Iewes, for parents and children to speake most commonly one to another in the neereſt and deareſt termes of loue*, by the name of father, mother, ſonne, daughter, and not by calling them onely by their names, as parents doe children now. See this in Gen. 22. 7. and 27. 1. and 48. 19. and in many other places, which argued meekeneſſe of ſpirit, intyre affection, and a louing naturall kindneſſe, worthy imitation.

Why will you goe with mee? This question is propounded to draw them to a conſideration of ſome reaſons within themſelues, why they ſhould reſolue to goe with her; as if ſhee had ſaid, I loue you, as a mother her daughters, therefore I aduiſe you to conſider ſeriously of your reſolution aforehand, and weigh with your ſelues, what may ſo lead you; for I can ſee no reaſon in worldly reſpects (for ſuch onely ſhee vrged both heere and in the verſes following) why you ſhould go with mee. And by this, as ſhe taught them, ſo vve may learne, that *it is a point of wiſedome to aſke our ſelues, Why we will doe this or that thing, before wee undertake it, or reſolue vpon it?* And hereunto our Sauour aduiſed, Luke 14. 28. for that is well begun, which is laid vpon good grounds and ſound reaſons; it is a wiſe proceeding, it will preuent the after *Had I wiſt*, and future repentance. Let vs therefore learne this wiſedome, and not bee fooliſhly raſh in our attempts.

Are

Are there yet any sonnes in my wombe, that they may be your husbands?] Naomi now beginneth to bring in her reasons, why shee would haue them to returne, all drawne from the world: in which respect, shee giueth them no comfort to follow her; and it is, as if she had said, If you will goe with mee for any vworldly respect, alas, I cannot pleasure you, I am old, I haue no sonnes to marry you againe vnto; and as for an outward estate, you see me very poore. In thus speaking plainly, and disswading onely by worldly reasons to try them, vve may learne,

I. *That she true honest-hearted, and such as feare God, in the kind offers of their friends, deale truly with them, and will not lead them into vaine hopes.* Thus Naomi dealeth; thus did our Sauour, Mat. 8. 20. for they would not deceiue them. Wee must labour for this plaine dealing; and not onely looke to our selues, and what present benefit wee may get to our selues, as most doe in these deceitfull times, which is contrary to our Christianity, 1. Thes. 4. 6. to true loue, 1. Cor. 13. and to the comfort of our ovne consciences. Men now a daies gladly make gaine of all proffers of loue, vvithout any respect to their friends; because men are false-hearted, and like such as David vv as troubled vvith, Psal. 41. 6.

II. *That worldly respects are not the motives which should induce any to ioyne themselves with Gods people; for they want these things often.* Of this our Sauour telleth the Lawyer, Luke 9. 57. The Godly heere haue their least share in the things
of

of this life, because they haue a better portion provided for them in the life to come. Wee are not then to become professours of Religion with others for these worldly things. *Naomi* telleth thee, this is not a good reason. Christ telleth thee hee is poore, and such as follow him, must take vp their crosse; must suffer affliction, saith *Paul*, 2. Tim. 3. 12. for to the godly it is giuen to suffer for him, Phil. 2. 29. Beware of a *Iudas* minde, to come for the bagge; or a *Demas*-like disposition, to come before thou hast shaken off the loue of the world: for if thou doest not, thou wilt sell Christ for the world, and bid the Gospell adieu for goods.

Quest. *Why is it said that shee had no sonnes moe for them to marry? why should shee thus speake to them?* We must know that it was a Law among the Iewes, thar a brother should raise vp seede to a brother, who left a wife, and dyed childlesse, Deut. 25. 5. Gen. 38. 8, 11. To which Law and practise her speech alludeth. And by this wee may thinke it very likely, that these women were taught in the Law of God, and made acquainted with the practise of Gods people. This is very probable, because *Naomi* was so godly a Matrone; and it appeareth by *Ruths* vertues: which being so, it commendeth the care of *Naomi* and her sonnes, for the soules of these young women, borne of Idolaters out of the Church, to teach them the Law of the true God. A good example for parents to follow, and for husbands; for fathers and mothers; See Pro. 4. 3, 4. Dent. 6. 7. Ephe.

Ephe. 6. 4. Deut. 11. 19. Pro. 31. 1. 2. Tim. 1. 5. and 3. 15. and for husbands read 1. Cor. 14. 35. But alas, many are so ignorant, as they cannot teach them, and many so carelesse, as they neglect them, many so wretched, as they will not, and some so prophane, as they mocke at it, and hold it no duty for them, but for the Priest (as in scorne they call the Minister of Christ) to performe.

Verse 12. *Turne againe, my daughters, goe your way, for I am too old to haue an husband: if I should say, I haue hope, if I should haue an husband also to night, and should also beare sonnes:*

NAmies third motion to haue them to returne, vsing still the same exhortation, with the like kind tearmes of loue, and adding another reason to moue them to returne.

Turne againe, my daughters, goe your way.] *Naomi* ceaseth not to vrge them still, to try them to the vtmost, not in want of zeale to gaine them to God, but in a godly ieaousie fearing their constancie, if they should goe on with her; of this before at large, and therefore here I omit the instructions.

For I am too old to haue an husband.] This reason is a preuenting of an obiection to her former reason: for they might say, Though, mother, you be not with child now, yet you may marry and haue children; to this *Naomi* answereth, that shee is too old to haue an husband. From this we learne, that

that *there is a time when women are too old to marry*, by the opinion of godly *Naomi*. Now if any aske when that is? I answer, as I suppose, when a woman is about sixtie yeeres of age; and therefore Saint *Paul* alloweth such a one for a widow, but not vnder, giuing leaue to others to marry: for vnder sixtie women haue had children, but none aboue, but *Sarabs* extraordinary blessing. And it is fit for women after sixtie, to follow the praise of blessed *Annah*, Luk. 1.37. We read not in the Scripture of the marriage of such: and if they be poore among vs, and doe marry, we dislike it, and speake against it: if they alledge the ends of marriage, they are easily answered: For the first is for procreation of children, which in the is past; the other is to auoid fornication, which they should be farre from; seeing the body is dead, the heart should not grow ranke with filthy lust: the lecherous old person is hated of God. If they alledge to marry for mutuall comfort: I aske, With whom will shee marry for such comfort? If with a yong man, shee may perhaps comfort her selfe in him, but not he himselfe with her: for yong men marry old womens goods and lands, but not their persons; there is in nature no accord between them, her wanton heart may seeke her pleasure in matching with him, but he will take no contentment in her, but for what shee hath. If with an old man: where is comfort, when two froward old persons meet together? old age, all know, is hard to please, and therefore old persons can hardly afford kind comforts one to another.

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Lastly,

Lastly, marriage bringeth cares and troubles, 1. Cor. 7. saith Saint Paul. Now it is time for old women to lay aside the cares of this world, and to giue themselues to fasting and prayer, and to doe good workes, and so to shew their care for the world to come. And therefore let such widowes continue widowes, & betake themselues to God and his diuine worship, as best befitteth them.

If I should say, I haue hope:] to wit, to haue children, and so might take an husband; implying thus much, that *while a womā hath hope of children, shee may marry;* for the first and chiefeft end of marriage such a one is not deprived of: And therefore let child-bearing women vse their libertie and marry, if they cannot abstaine, 1. Cor. 7. 1. Tim. 5. 28. yea though they be poore, neither may any be offended thereat.

If I should haue an husband also to night.] This circumstance of time is noted, that these women had gone nigh one dayes iournēy with Naomi at the least. So they shewed herein great kindnesse to trauell so farre with her, or that it was farre on the day before they came forth, if this was the first night: or else shee speaketh thus, for that marriage was consummated at night. Here some may aske, why needed Naomi thus to speake of her hauing an husband and bearing of children, seeing shee knew that the next kinsman was to doe the office for the dead? Chap. 3. 1, 2. Shee might haue said, Your husbands haue kinsmen, which by our Law are to marry you, if you will goe with me, though I haue no sonnes my selfe. Naomi knew this

this well enough, as it appeareth afterwards, but first shee will not draw them to the Lords people with such carnall reasons; againe, shee knew not, perhaps, now, whether such were dead or aliue; if aliue, yet they might be marryed, and so could not take them for wiues: if vnmarryed, shee yet knew not whether they would submit to the Law in that case. For we see that what God commanded, was not euer obeyed, and the Story telleth vs that one kinsman, Chap. 4. refused her; and why not another? And therefore, because shee could not speake any thing of certainty on which they might depend, shee mentioneth no such thing: shewing this, that *the wise will not make promises rashly for others, nor perswade to more then they well know*, lest they be deceiued, and so also deceiue others relying vpon their word. This re- proueth all rash vndertakers for others, though reason and Religion should bind those, for whom they so vndertake, to performe the same.

And should also beare sonnes. Naomi speaketh first of hauing a husband, and then of bearing children; for *childbirth is to be the fruit of lawfull marriage onely*. God first ioyned man and woman, and made them man and wife, and then said, Increase and multiply. Naomi was not of that mind to make her selfe a mother out of marriage, as many wantons and Light-skirts doe, making themselues whores, and their children bastards, and all for fatisfying the rage of present lust, though after they repent with grieve and shame.

Verse 13. *Would yee tarry for them, till they were growne? would yee stay for them from hauing husbands? nay, my daughters: for it grieveth me much for your sakes, that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.*

N *Ami* here dissuadeth them from staying for husbands by her, if it were granted that now shee had borne sonnes; and hauing thus spoken, shee breaketh forth into a sorrowfull complaint of her inabilitie to doe them good, for their sakes. The dissuasion is set out by a double interrogation, for more vehemencie of speech, and by an answer made thereto. In the complaint shee sheweth her grieffe, and that for whose sake chiefly, and how it came vpon her.

Would yee tarry for them, till they were growne? As if shee had said, If I had now yong sonnes, you could not marry them till they were of sufficient yeeres, they must be growne vp to marriage before they doe marry: *Marriage is for them that are growne vp for it, and are marriageable.* God, when he made our first parents, made them of yeeres fit for procreation of children before he married them. And this is to be obserued for the due accomplishment of marriage, and for reuerence to Gods ordinance; which checketh those parents, who for other ends then the ends of marriage, doe match their children together before they be marriageable. Here parents abuse marriage; for this is no coniunction for procreation

tion of children, nor to auoid fornication: these parents take away their childrens liberty, which is to marry, or not to marry when they come to yeeres of discretion: they are cruell and mercilesse parents, who bind their children in an vnseparable knot and indissoluble bond, before they vnderstand what they doe: such matches are commonly cursed of God, one forsaking another whea they come to yeeres, or hating one another, liuing in the gall of bitternesse all their dayes, and so parents expectation is frustrate, and children vndone, with sorrow to friends on all sides. A iust punishment of God, and reward of their sinne.

Would yee stay for them from hauing husbands?] As if she had said, You are yong women, & there are men now fit husbands for you, it is not meet you should therefore stay so long for little children, and so be vnfitly matched with them so yong, and you so old. *It is not good for such as intend to marry, to deferre off so long.* This is it which Naomi here teacheth her daughters, and this counsell is good, if the parties cannot abstaine, and that fit matches be offered; let them yeld to the good hand of Gods prouidence, and not refuse an honest offer, either of pride, or of foolish fantasie, or of some nicety, or other light and idle womanish reason, against good reason and sound perswasion of godly and wise friends.

Nay, my daughters.] This answer sheweth Naomi her meaning in the former interrogations, that she could not approue of their deferring off

to marry, but that being yong, they should not refuse to marry againe, when God should send them fit husbands. *A godly and wise mother in law, like Naomi, cannot onely be willing, but also will perswade her children in law should marry againe.* For they know, this liberty is graunted them of God, and in their owne conscience they know it reasonable, and perhaps in others of necessity. Shee was not like those mothers in law, which after the death of their owne children, cannot endure to heare of the second marriage of their children in law, whether sonnes or daughters.

For it grieveeth me much.] Here is the reason given, why she willeth them to returne, and to take husbands againe, euen for the griefe of her heart; for that seeing them as poore widdowes as her selfe, and remembring her sonnes, and how little she could doe for them, she heauily sustained the griefe, and therefore perswaded them to take husbands againe, in whom they might haue comfort. Note here, how *the most godly sometime do take their afflictions very heauily*: as Naomi here, so Iob, Chap. 3. Ieremy, Chap. 20: 9, 12. which commeth through weakenesse of faith, want of patience, want of humility, through also the strength of corruption and the aggrauating of the affliction, euer looking vpon it, but not weighing the will of God, the necessity of the crosse, and the good which might come thereby. Well, yet if the best may be much cast downe, then let not such as be free, not vnder the crosse, not knowing how they can beare it, censure others

thers for their weakenesse vnder the burthen: but rather take notice thereof, and be a staffe of comfort vnto them, helpe to beare the burthen with them, and pray for their patience.

For your sakes.] Afflictions are the more grievous for friends wrapped therein, so as one cannot well helpe another. Naomi was greatly afflicted, but the more (shee saith) for her daughters miserie with her, who losing her sonnes, made also them poore widowes. Abimelechs destruction encreased Davids sorrowes and troubles. Eliab not a little grieved for the widowes sorrow with whom he sojourned: and so was Luther for the Duke of Saxonic: and the reason hereof is true loue, which taketh to heart a friends affliction in their owne troubles, as David did Abiathars, 1. Sam. 22. 22. This grace of true friendship is much to be wished: for men now a dayes care not much for their friends miserie, if they be in prosperity, or if in aduersity with them, how they themselues may get out, though they leaue their friends, as a pawne for themselves: yea such villanie is in some men, that they will purposely bring their friends into misery, to doe themselues a pleasure; coozen them, to enrich themselues; ouerthrow them, to set vp themselues.

That the hand of the Lord.] Thus she calleth her affliction, the hand of the Lord, because all afflictions come by the power and providence of God, as by an hand vpon vs, Iob, 1. 21. and 16. 12. Lam. 1. 12 17. Amos 3. 6. and 4. 6, 7, 11. 2. Chro. 15. 6. Esay 45, 6, 7. For afflictions come not out of the dust,

Psalme 52.

1. King. 17.

20, 21.

Acts and Mon.

pag. 775. a.

neither do troubles spring out of the ground, Job 5.6. Let then all afflictions bee acknowledged to be Gods hand, not as chance with the Philistims, not of the Deuill, witches, and ill instruments. If we acknowledge them with *Iob* from God, we will goe to him, humble our selues before him, pray for pardon, and deliuerance by him, as who onely can deliuer vs: yea, this will make vs patient vnder the crosse, this will worke some contentment, and say, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good; This will make vs quiet towards the ill instruments, as *David* was towards *Saul* and towards *Shimei*: This will comfort vs vnder the affliction, when we know it to be Gods hand, and that out of his fatherly mercy he will lay no more vpon vs, then we shall be able to beare.

Is gone out against mee. This good woman applieth the whole crosse to her selfe. The godly in comon calamities take themselves to be especially chastised; they put not off the cause to others, but take it to themselves, as *David* did, 1. Chr. 21. 17. 2. Sam. 24. 27. They thinke vpon their own finnes, and not on other mens misdeeds. This is that which humbleth them, and this is it which would humble vs: which grace we must labour for.

Verse 14. *And they lift vp their voice and wept againe: and Orpha kissed her mother in law, but Ruth claue vnto her.*

Here is the euent and effect of *Naomies* speech againe; first, ioyntly in both, which was againe

gaine their passion, and then distinctly, shewed in contraries, in *Orphaes* valediction, and *Ruth* remaining still with her mother in law.

And they lift up their voice and wept againe.] A-gaine their passion of teares is recorded; both alike in passion of affection, but farre differing in the truth of the action, the best demonstration of the heart: for in both was a like shew of loue in their weeping, yet not the like constant coniunction of heart towards *Naomi*; for the one forsooke her, and the other abode and went on with her. Whence we may see, that *all outward sorrow giveth not certaine witnesse of the soundnesse of the heart*; this is plaine by this example, and by *Sauls* weeping to *Danid*. As this is true in men, so more in women, who haue teares at command. Doe we not reade how the *Israelites* would weepe on one day, and be in rebellion another? Was not *Ishmael* in his very weeping, a very deepe dissembler, the like neuer heard of? We are not easily therefore to be perswaded of inward hearty affection, from weeping and sheading of teares. This deceiued the fourescore men which met *Ishmael*, and were most of them slain by him. Some can shead teares at will; and all weeping doth not come from the like cause, though many weepe together, and in appearance haue the same reason: there be that will weep for company, because they see others to weepe, neuer inwardly moued from the cause, but most from the outward passion of the parties; yet though there be a weeping not commendable, as that which is counterfeit, that which is vp-
on

on euery light occasion, or which is vpon iust cause, but in excesse: yet it is sometime a matter praise-worthy, when it is from a naturall affection, as in *Ioseph* to his brethren and father; from sound loue to a friend, as *Ionathans* and *Dauids* weeping; and when it is from a gracious heart, for a mans owne sinnes, as *Peters* weeping was; or for the sinnes of others, as *Dauids*, *Psal.* 119. *Jeremies*, *Chap.* 13. And Iesus Christ his weeping ouer Ierusalem, *Luke* 19. 41. Blessed are these mourners, for they shall be comforted, these teares are put into the Lords bottle, *Psal.* 56. 8. And such as be so doggedly hard-hearted, and want naturall affection, and sound loue, so as neither for friend, nor kinsman, nor the nighest of blood, they can weepe for, are very vnnaturall, and worse then brute beasts, which bleate and loow for their own kinde: so also they which can perhaps weepe for the world, for departure of friends, for losse of parents, children, husband, or wife, yet not for sin, not for Gods dishonor, not for the affliction of *Ioseph*, not for want of the Word, and the taking away of the righteous; are worldlings, are destitute of diuine grace, of the true loue of God and goodnesse; for men can and will mourne for such things as be euer neere and deare vnto them, and which they, indeede, take to heart.

[And Orpha kissed her mother in law.] As *Naomi* did by this act, in verse 9. take her farewell of *Orpha* with *Ruth*, so now, *Orpha* departing, thus taketh leaue of her. She wept in loue, and kissed her in token of loue, and as loth to depart, yet voluntarily

tarily leaueſt her, becauſe ſhee perceiued by *Nam* her words, that ſhe could not receiue worldly contentment, if ſhee ſhould goe with her. So here were ſignes of loue onely, but not the truth of it. *It is eaſie to make ſignes of loue, but not to ſhew the true fruits of loue.* Theſe be chargeable, the other coſt nothing, therefore they are afforded very cheape: and where onely outward ſignes of loue be, and not a hearty vniõ, there worldly loſſes, or the feare of ſuch loſſes, or not the hope to gaine the things of this life, will ſoone ſeparate ſuch friends, as wee ſee in this woman. Note further,

I. That worldly reſpects are great hinderances in the courſe of Godlineſſe: the world keepeth from the entertaining of the Truth, Mat. 22. 15. It hindereth in the receiuing of it, Mat. 13. It pulleth men from it, which haue ſomewhat gone forward in it, as wee may ſee here in *Orpha*, in *Iehu*, *Iudas*, *Demas*, and *Henry* the 4. the laſt King of France: and this commeth from the exceeding loue of it, and our chiefeſt care for the body, and the things of this life. But let vs take heede of this world, for ſuch as loue it, the loue of God the Father is not in them: & many for loue of the world, forſaking Religion, haue felt the wo thereof, and haue loſt that which they loued. Remember *Iudas*, he had the money, but what was hee the better? it did not comfort him, neither did it continue with him, neither he long in the world. And yet wretched Caitifes that wee be, like *Gadarens*, we will loſe Chriſt, rather then our ſwine;
and

1. Iohn 2. 15.

and with *Eve*, lose Paradise for an Apple.

II. That an *unsound heart* may for a time make a faire shew in the way to Canaan, but yet turne backe at the last, as *Orpha* doth here, and as we may see in *Iehu*, *Iudas*, *Demas*, *Hymeneus*, *Alexander*, *Philetus*, and many other in all ages, falling backe from the Truth, which they indeed did neuer soundly loue, and yet will such make so faire an entrance. And this is by reason, first, of certaine general motions of Religion, which maketh them in generall to approue of the same; againe, the generall esteeme of the very name of Religion; all holding this, that it is a good thing to bee religious, and that none can find fault with a man for that. Further, the working of the Word, mouing the heart in some sort, to intertaine it: and lastly, the desire of praise and good esteeme with men. These will make hollow hearts to set on a while to heauenward, but shall not bee able to enter. Therefore we are not easily to entertaine men for sincere, because they haue made and doe make faire shewes in Religion for a time, seeing they may be *unsound*, and after fall away. And this should make vs to examine our owne hearts, lest secret hypocrisie lurke therein, and it breake out at the length to our shame.

III. That such as want soundnesse towards God for Religion, may yet haue otherwise commendable parts in them. For *Orpha* is commended for a kind wife, as well as *Ruth* by *Naomi*, and for a kind daughter in law, verse 8. and shee shewed good huma-

humanity is going on the way with her mother in law, yet good natural affection in weeping, so at parting. What shall I speake of *Isaacs* valiant and hardy spirit, of the great wisdom of *Achitophel* in all worldly affaires, and of morall men among the Heathen? Many, which had no part nor portion in Christ, haue done vworthily in the things praise-vworthy among men, by a restrained nature by the power of conscience, from the law of nature, vvritten in their hearts, and by the common gifts of the Spirit: And therefore not to iudge our selues or others soundly religious, and regenerate by Gods Spirit, for our commendations in meere moral vertues, or common gifts of the Spirit, for the Heathen haue surpassed many true Christian hearts herein, & many by a meere ciuill education, and orderly bringing vp in the laudable fashions of men, and good carriage of themselves, as men among men, attaine to great commendations in and for their courtesie, affability, discretion, & many qualities, in learning and Arts, which they affect for praise with men, for their priuate profit, for aduancement in the world, and not that they doe good things for goodnesse sake, from the power of grace and godlinesse in their hearts, which was as yet neuer ingrafted in them, as appeareth by their little knowledge in the Word of God, by their demeaning of themselves like Statists, indifferently betweene two religions, by neglecting the examination of their wayes by the Word, but keeping company with all sorts alike, so

so farre as worldly disgrace come not thereby, by neuer caring for the growth of Religion in themselves, or in others, to make the least opposition for it against the common streame. By all which, and by many good things wanting in them, as a holy zeale, seruency in prayer, the loue of the truth for the truths sake, & such as loue it, delight in meditating of Gods Word, and conferring thereof, sorrow for the afflictions of Gods people, and ioy in the ouerthrow of the enemies thereof, (which graces meere moralists are quite destitute of) wee may see that the life of Religion, and that heavenly light of true grace is not ingrafted in them; which is more worth than all the rest, which yet are commendable: but these ought chiefly to be our praises, and yet not leaue the other vndone: for the one makes a man, but the other a Christian: and these together, I meane, good carriage, and ciuill behauiour, Learning, Arts and other good qualities, make an excellent Christian man.

But Ruth slaued vnto her.] Though Orpha gaue occasion for Ruth to fall off from Naomi, yet her example moued not. *A well-grounded affection is not remoued by the inconstancy of others,* Ioh. 6. 68. for true loue is fixed vpon the thing beloued, and is not tyed to any by-respects. Their loue then is to be reprobued, who fall off for company; their affections were neuer well settled: but Ruths loue was most firme, her person was as it were glewed vnto Naomi, as the force of the Hebrew word is, to be knit as man and wife inseparably. So the word

word is vsed, Gen. 2. 24. Mat. 19. 5. Thus should the loue of Gods people bee one to another, hearty and constant.

Verse 15. *And shee said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone backe vnto her people, and vnto her gods: returne thou after thy sister in law.*

THis is *Naomi* her last triall of *Ruth*; and these words shew plainly, all was to trie her, because she telleth *Ruth* of *Orphaes* going backe, not onely to her people, but also to her gods, which *Naomi* a good woman could not but hate, and could not so ill respect *Ruth*, and shew so great coldnesse in Religion, and honour of the true God, as to dissuade *Ruth* from the same God of truth, to returne vnto Idols.

This verse is an exhortation pretended then, but not intended, with the motiue thereto propounded, which was the Apostacy of *Orpha*, shewing what shee was to *Ruth*, and whither shee returned backe.

And she said. *Naomi* vpon *Orphaes* departure, for further triall of *Ruth*, taketh her example, and propoundeth the same to her: for as she now saw *Orphaes* inconstancie for all her former resolution and teares, so shee had hereby some cause to make further triall of *Ruth*, this one time. The falls of some may iustly bring others into the tryall, though not wholly to doubt of their constancie; as if none could be good, because some are bad: for some may fall from grace, when other may

may, through Gods mercy, continue to the end. Behold, thy sister in law is gone backe.] These words shew, as soone as Orpha had kissed her mother-in law, shee went backe, with whom, or with what company is not mentioned; of her sister in law Ruth, shee taketh no leaue, as supposing shee would come after; for we commonly iudge others by our selues, though wee be deceiued, as Orpha was of Ruth. In Orphaes leauing Naomi vpon such light reasons, wee see, that a feeble heart, not truly settled, with weake reasons of worldly wants, is soone drawne from a right way of well-doing. Silly were the reasons which Naomi vsed to put her to the prooffe: which sheweth that all her former words in verse 10. were but a flourish, and were vttered more of a suddaine passion, than out of any settled resolution: yet this was not her onely weakenesse, but shee left it to posteritie. For wee may find her followers, such as vpon light motions will soone turne from goodnesse, which shew that they are not settled truly in their affections before they begin, but lightly vndertake the way towards heauen, as did Orpha to Canaan, and as easily giue it ouer. A misery to be bewailed; and by a well-grounded resolution aforehand to bee preuented. Againe, in this, that Naomi trieth Ruth with this her sisters example, saying, Behold, shee is gone backe; it teacheth, that Examples of kindred, friends and old acquaintance declining from goodnesse, are trials of others, to see whether they will abide; and indeede no small inducements to pull others after them. Adam was soone drawne by Eue; Rebobo-

hobbaums heart was easily led after the aduice of his familiars; the women of Iudah by their husbands easily fell to Idolatry; which often is done vpon foolish affection to those whom they follow, and not of iudgement; sometime of feare to offend, sometime in flatterie, sometime through an ignorant perswasion that others doe well, in that they doe; especially if the example before them, be of persons of place, learning, honour, and great for outward estate: for they fondly thinke, that such cannot doe amisse. Well, seeing Examples are so forcible, let them be wel examined before they be imitated, be the persons whatsoeuer; for precepts and not examples are rules to liue by; very excellent persons haue often done amisse, and gone out of the way; and as for kindred and acquaintance, wee are not to loue them before Religion, which should make a diuision between them, and vs, if they take not the right way, and make vs forsake them; remembring that one day God will diuide acquaintances, Math. 24. 40, 41. Luke 17. 34. And if yer men will here stick to them in euill, and not vvillingly separate themselves, they shall then perish all together, and too late vvilt thou then repent, vvich vvast led avvay vvith their company, complaining of thy folly, and curse the time that euer thou didst knowv them.

Vnto her people.] That is, to the Moabites, of whom shee was, and among whom shee was borne. Shee was going to Gods people, but shee runneth backe to Idolaters, because shee was of

Ier. 44. 19.

Luk. 10. 52, 53.
& 14. 26.

*Ouid. lib. 1. de
Ponto:*

*Nescio qua na-
tale solum dulce-
dine cunctos*

*Ducit, & im-
memores non si-
nit esse sui.*

them, there borne, as I say, and acquainted with them. *It is hard to forsake our native Countrey, where we are borne and brought up.* This may we see in *Orpha*, and in the mixt company which came out of *Egypt*; thither would they haue returned againe, though there they had liued in bondage; and this is first from a naturall instinct in euery one, euen as the Heathen man witnesseth. Againe, there is better hope, as is supposed, in wants to be relieued among friends, kindred, and acquaintance in their owne countrey, then elsewhere in a strange place. And lastly, the very thorow-acquaintance & knowledge of the country, the people, their nature and conditions, and their owne bringing vp there like vnto them, is a great meanes to keepe the affection and heart towards the same. But from this in case of Religion we must labour to weane our selues, and follow *Abraham*, Heb. 11.8. and religious Profelytes, *Ittai*, and *Vriah*, with many others, yea and of later times blessed Exiles from their Natiue countryes for the Gospels sake, considering that one day we must bid farewell to all the World.

And to her gods.] This is a check vnto *Orpha*: in which *Naomi* doth closely shew vnto *Ruth*, her sisters misery in going backe, which was, to worship Idols, and Deuils, with the people of her countrey, seeing shee now had none to keepe her backe from the same. Hence note briefly,

1. That to leaue Gods people, to goe so dwell among Idolaters, is euen to become an Idolater; For the loue of Idolaters will bring to the loue of their Idols:

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see it in *Salomon*, and in *Iehoram Iehosaphats sonne*: for such haue dayly prouocations to that, which indeed they be of their owne natures prone vnto: and therefore the Lord did forbid his people to haue any fellowship with the Nations, lest they should become Idolaters. Therefore let vs not come among Idolaters, if we would not be like them: we may not presume of our owne strength, nor thinke by our groudednes in Religion, to take our liberty to marry with them, to dwell with them, or long to trauell among them; for we see dayly by experience, the vanity of this cōfidence.

II. That *what the Idolaters worship, that they take to be God, and so offer diuine worship to it*. This is plaine by *Naomi* her speech, calling the Idols of the Moabites, Gods; & we find that all Idolaters gaue to their Idols the name of God. See this in wicked *Ieroboam*, 1. King. 12.28. and in the Israelites, *Exod.* 32. 8. And therefore we may here see the palpable blindnesse with which God striketh such, to make vs auoid them, and yet bemoane them, as also to feare where such be, lest Gods wrath seaze vpon vs, for their so robbing the true God of his honour.

III. That *Idolaters haue moe gods than one*, as these Moabites had, *Baal Peor*, *Num.* 25. and *Chemosh*, 1. Kin. 11. The Grecians had thousands of gods; and the Heathen Romanes not a few: for leauing or not knowing the true God, they wander they know not whither, they haue no certainty whereon to rest, they follow what they either imagine, or other doe deuise, or what by o-

thers examples are practised before them; see it in the Israelites forsaking the Lord, and in the idolatrous Papists at this day. For idolatrie is as whoredom, which maketh the Adulterer to range abroad in vnfatiable lust, not content with one, no nor with many: no more doe the spirituall Adulterers rest with one false god, but are mad vpon all they see, Ezech. 16. 24, 25, 28. O therefore let vs prayse our God, who hath opened our eyes to see and know him, and hath deliuered vs from this miserable slavery of Idolaters, who serue so many! they must needs be in great feare: for they be as seruants seruing many masters, all tyrants and all of seuerall qualities; how should they then euer rest in peace? Note before I conclude, how these Moabites, filthy Idolaters, were the children of *Lot*, begotten in incest vpon one of his owne daughters in his drunkenesse. Whence we may see, that *the ill begotten children of the godly are rather left vnder the curse of their fathers sinne, then made partakers of any of their vertues*, as appeareth both in Moabites and Ammonites, and in *Abimelech* the bastard sonne of *Gideon*; to shew the Lords hatred of all filthinesse in his people, and to strike feare into their hearts for offending this way. Let Parents note this, to take heed they be not fathers of an vnlawfull issue, if it be not for their owne sakes, yet for those they shall beget, whom they bring vnder a curse, for their sinne. Let bastards here learne to bewaile their birth, and labour by a new birth according to the Spirit, to wipe out the staine of their parentage according

cording to the flesh.

Turne thee after thy sister in law.] This exhortation cannot be taken as seriously meant: for would *Naomi* perswade *Ruth* to idolatrie, and turne her from going to Gods people and the true God, to goe to the society of Idolaters and to deuils? We may not possibly thinke so vncharitably of her, and the 18. verse putteth it out of controuersie, where it is said, When shee saw *Ruth* stedfastly minded, she left off to speake, as hauing found out what shee sought for, and till then shee ceased not to make triall. For where iust suspicion of unsoundnesse is, there triall may be made to the utmost, till the doubt be removed: For this is not to beate the parties from goodnesse, but to see their vnfeigned loue of goodnesse, that they being tried, may be well approoued of. Let not any be offended then at such tryals, for if thou beeest sound, the oftener thou art brought to the touchstone, the more purer gold thou wilt appeare to be.

Verse 16. *And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leaue thee, or to retorne from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will goe, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God.*

Ruths answer vnto *Naomi*: wherein is her request vnto her, and a reason expressing her full resolution, partly in this verse, and partly in the next verse following.

And Ruth said.] In this answer following, *Ruth* sheweth most plainly that shee was of a very constant resolution, and not a whit moued with the scandall of her sister in lawes departure, and leauing of her alone. For the well settled soules are not to be remoued from their resolution to good, for any less, which Satan and his instruments may cast before them, and in their way. The wrath of *Nebuchadnezzar* cannot make the three Children start backe; the Plots of Princes against *Daniel* cannot make his heart to faint, neither to neglect to pray vnto his God three times a day. Neither foure hundred flatterers, nor feare of *Achabs* wrath can make *Michaiab* dissemble, nor hault in the message of the Lord. A world of wicked ones cannot make a righteous *Noah* the worse, nor corrupt righteous *Lot* in the midst of Sodom: They may vex him, but neuer gaine him to their wickednesse. What can afflictions worke vpon *Saint Paul*? Surely nothing: they may draw him neerer to God, but neuer pull such a one from God. Lastly, let back-flyders reuolt; will *Orphaes* example moue *Ruth*? will the falling away of some from Christ, make the Disciples to leaue him? No, no; they are built on the Rock, and not on the sand. Therefore we are not to feare their fall; they make God their strength, and he vpholdeth them, so as none can pluck them out of his hands.

Ioh. 10. 27, 28.

Trem. Iunius, Montan. So in the margent of the new Translation.

Intreat me not to leaue thee.] These words may be read two wayes: first thus, *Be not against me:* and so reading, we learne, that *they are against vs,* who

who vse reasons, or doe exhort vs to turne backe from well-doing; therefore Christ called Peter, *Satan*, that is, Aduersarie, one that was against him, when he gaue him counsell to doe otherwise then his Father had appointed, and otherwise then according to the end he came for: and so should Eue haue thought of the Serpents counsell; and Israel of *Ieroboams*: for such with-hold men from pleasing God, from the comfort of conscience, which is onely gotten by well-doing, and from the hope of the blessed reward which is promised to well-doing. Let vs then hold such for our Aduersaries; and not thinke as the men of the world do, who hold all their kind friends which any way pleasure the body, though they be Aduersaries to their soules, in hindering them in the way to life and saluation, by perswading them to pleasures vnlawful, to vniust gaine, to a false religion & idolatrous worship, as Popery is: But in these things, because they be blind and see not their harme, they therefore thinke not that such be against the, when yet there be no greater Aduersaries then these. The second reading is as it is translated, *Intreat me not to leaue thee*. And thus taking the words, we learne from this godly yong woman, that the godly haue a desire not to be hindred in a good course. Ruth was going from Idolaters to the Church of God, and was in loue with *Naomi*, whom she would accompany thither, and would not be intreated to forsake her; no more would *Elisha* leaue *Elish*. The godly are like to *Achimaz*, who would not be let for running to *Dauid*: for,

Mat. 16. 23.

Gal. 1. 15.

Act. 21. 13.

indeed, they set their hearts on the Lords wayes, and haue a full resolution to doe well, by Gods helpe, and doe reioyce in the way of well-doing; and finding therein comfort, like *Abrahams* seruant, will not be stayed, but doe hasten home to their Heauenly Country. This grace let vs labour for, to haue a desire not to be hindred in a good course, nor to be withdrawne from good purposes, but stand fast in our honest resolutions; which if indeed we doe, then will we shew it: we will pray to God to further vs, and to remoue all lets that may hinder; we will check such as are against vs; we will prevent all hinderances, and sometimes auoid the occasions which might draw vs backe, as did *Saint Paul*; we will withstand the letts, as *Paul* also did: and as *Dauid* did when he had a mind to encounter *Goliath*, his brethrens contempt of himselfe, the Israelites feare of *Goliath*, the words of *Saul*, nor the Philistims greatnesse nor brags, could hinder him, he would follow his resolution: so should we in all good things.

Or to turne from following after thee.] As if shee had said, Vse no more words to hinder my honest intendement, but goe on that I may follow thee: let my sister in law goe to her people and gods too; her example moueth me not one whit, I will goe with thee to thy people and to thy God: I haue tasted by thee of true Religion, the power whereof and thy vertues so bind me, as I can leaue all, countrey, kindred, & friends, and old acquaintance, to follow thee, my mother. See here,

I. How Religion and grace maketh such as be of
seuerall

seuerall nations, to loue one another, to loue forrainers being religious, better then friends, kindred and old acquaintance not religious. Ruth is in loue with Naomi a Iew, and esteemeth not of Orpha her countrey woman; for, indeed, Religion maketh a more sure coniunction, in a more blessed kindred then nature, hauing God for our Father, the Church for our Mother, the Saints for our Brethren, the Spirit of God for the bond of our vnion, which maketh vs to desire to liue and die together. Labour for this loue, the loue of the brethren, before naturall loue of friends not religious; for this is a true signe of our eternall saluation, and that we be translated from death to life.

1. Iohn 3.

I I. *A heart truly in loue with the godly, will not easily be remoued to forsake them, by the falling away of others; as we may see by this example: By Iona-thans cleauing to David, and the Disciples continuing with Christ, though others forsooke him. And this is, because their loue is well grounded: for they know the godly to be in their persons honorable; how basely soeuer the slaues of Satan esteeme of them, they know them to be Kings, and Priests vnto God. They discern of their graces, and are in loue with them for the same, yea, they hauing the same Spirit, doe by the force thereof knit themselues to them: and doe know that their end is happinesse, whatsoeuer their present estate be in this vale of miserie. Let vs cleave then to these, though others doe fall away; and that we may so doe, let vs not take offence at their weakenesses and frailties, but consider of their*
loue

Iohn 6.

Psal. 37.37.

loue with God, of their excellent graces, and how that holy Spirit of God dwelleth in them, that they be such as be Coheires with Christ, and shall reigne with him in glory.

For whither thou goest, I will goe, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge.] This is the reason of *Ruths* request to *Naomi* from her resolution, which is, not to forsake her company, but to goe with her, and to lodge with her, wheresoeuer shee shall lodge; this is her resolution, which made her continue with *Ruth*, and not start backe. Whence note, That the putting on of a strong resolution, will make one withstand all oppositions and hinderances, which may lie in the way, to be lets from well-doing. This made *Michaiab* to doe faithfully the Lords message, 2. Kin. 22. This made *S. Paul* to go on to Ierusalem without daunt of Spirit, Acts 20. 24. with 21. 31. for a grounded resolution is such a settling of thy heart, as it cannot easily be removed. Let vs therefore put on this resolution, in making an onfet to goodnesse, and in euery good action, seeing there may be many hinderances in the way: and to doe this, that our hearts start not backe, wee must make our resolution strong by these things; wee must see that the thing wee take in hand, be good & lawfull; then, whether lawfull to vs, and what calling we haue thereto: thirdly, to weigh the circumstances of time and place, so that it may bee done seasonably and fitly. This is prudence, which will much commend the deede. Fourthly, note with our selues the end, Gods glory, publike good, discharge of our duty, and be-

ware

ware of sinister respects. Lastly, forecast all rubbes which may happen in the way; for such foresight fore-warneth, and hee which is fore-warned, is halfe armed, and will not repent with an Had I wist; neither will be moued with such lets, Acts 20. 24. Note againe from hence, that *Ruth* expecteth not against any condition which may befall *Naomi*; but will goe with her, and take such part as shee taketh, whether the lodging be good or bad; whether the place be comfortable, or otherwise, whither *Naomi* shall goe. Which example telleth vs, that *such as truly loue the godly, both can and will giue themselves to them, to accompany them in euery estate, not onely in prosperity, but in aduersitie, as did Moses, because they know that God is with them, Zach. 8. 23. they account themselves one, and are of one heart, & hauing giuen themselves to the Lord, they cannot but giue themselves to his people, 2. Cor. 8. 5. And therefore if wee doe loue the godly, keepe them company, and forsake them not in their aduersity.*

[*Thy people shall bee my people.*] Shee loueth a good woman, her mother in law *Naomi*; and thereby giueth her selfe to the loue of all Gods people: for *they that loue one godly person for godlineesse sake, cannot but affect all the Lords flocke: for there is the like reason to all, as to one in that respect: and the same Spirit that vniteth the heart of one godly person to another, vniteth the same to all the rest, as being together members of Christs mysticall body. This may trie our true loue to euery godly person, by our true loue vpon*

on the some ground to all the rest: for else that particular loue will not be found to be other then sinister. *Davids* delight was not in one Saint, but in the *Saints*, that dwell vpon the earth. True it is, that by a priuate familiarity, and particular acquaintance with one more than another, the loue may more shew it selfe, as in reason it must and will: yet such a loue vpon occasion will truly shew it selfe to all others, which are vnited in the profession of the same truth, and will be ready to doe them good when such are knowne, as it euer doth wish you well, before there be any acquaintance at all. And if one godly person by a vertuous life may not onely procure loue to him or her selfe, but also to all other of Gods people, this should make vs so to demeane our selues euery one of vs, as wee may so winne others to vs, as also the same persons vnto the rest which feare God, for the encrease of Gods Kingdome, and so the hastening of Christs appearing.

And thy God, my God.] As shee leaueth her owne people being Idolaters, for Gods people, so shee renounceth her Idols for the true God: for they which truly for godlinesse sake embrace Gods people, cannot but then intertaine the true God, and leaue their Idols, 1. Thes. 1. 6, 9. As *Ruth* did here, and *Rabab* also: because the loue of godlinesse in men, ariseth from the loue of God himselfe, the Author of that goodnesse in his people. The Corinthians gaue first themselves to the Lord, then to his Seruants: and *Zacharie* foretelleth that the Heathen hauing heard of the Lord to be among

2. Cor. 8. 5.
Zach. 8. 23.

among the Jewes, they will then come and desire to be with them. Trye our loue to the godly by a sound intertainement of their Religion, else the loue is but carnall, worldly, or counterfeite; for in differing religions, there neither is nor can be any true concord; and therefore let vs not thinke that either idolaters, Atheists, or irreligious persons can be any faithfull louers of the truth. Note againe, that *godly persons may by their godlines draw others vnto the embracing of the true God*; either by instruction, or by a holy conuersation, or rather both together; And therefore let vs labour by our godlinesse in doctrine and life, so to set forth the Lords praises, as wee may gaine others vnto him. This is our duty, Mat. 5. 16. this is Christian-like carriage, which becommeth well the Saints; this will winne soules to God, and so couer the multitude of finnes, bee an aduancement to the Lords name, and bring comfort to our owne soules in the Day of Iesus Christ. It may be, some will aske, Whether for meere loue to the person of any, if one intertaine Religion, he may be iustified in so doing? Surely no: One may occasion another, or be a motiue thereto; and so performe a good office on his part; but Religion is to bee beloued and imbraced for it selfe, and not for mans sake; the person on whom a man relieth, may die, or turne backe from the truth, and become such a ground as the sand, on which an house being built, soone decayeth, and the fall thereof is great.

2. Cor. 6. 14.

Mat. 5. 16.

1. Pet. 3. 1. and

2. 11.

Verse

Verse 17. *Where thou dieſt, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord doe ſo to me and more alſo, if ought but death part thee and mee.*

RUTH continueth her ſpeech to *Naomi*, touching her reſolution, which ſhee had begunne to ſhew in the former verſe; and in this confirmeth it with an oath, ſo that *Naomi* neede not to doubt of her conſtancie.

Where thou dieſt.] *Ruth* ſpeaketh of her mothers death, and alſo of her owne. *It is a principle in nature, to know and to be perſwaded that all ſhall die,* Iob 21. 33. Heb. 9. 27. 1. King. 2. 1. Ioh. 23. 14. 1. Cor. 15. 51. Eccleſ. 7. 2. and 6. 6. for death goeth over all, in as much as all haue ſinned, Rom. 5. Then let all prepare to die, at one time, or at another: which ſtands in ſeeking reconciliation with God in Chriſt, & in endeavouring to keepe a good conſcience before God & man, A& 24. 16. vvaithing the time of diſſolution, which the men of pleaſures, as *Dines*; the vvorldly-minded, as the rich man; the drowſie proteſtant, like the five fooliſh Virgins, and ſuch as go on ſecurely, as thoſe in the old vvorld, and in Sodom, Mat. 24. 37, 38, 39. doe not. All knowv they muſt die, yet moſt neglect to prepare to die, and to provide for themſelves a better habitation; vvhih men on earth vvill doe, vvhen they knowv, they muſt out of their dwellings; they will not be to ſeek to the very day, in which they knowv they ſhalbe put out.

I will die.] I meane to end my daies vvith thee, my mother, I vvill not returne againe into my
Coun-

Countrey, but vwill make my end, in vvhat place
 focuer thou shalt die. *The true loue of the godly one
 towards another, is a continuing and enduring loue to
 death.* So vvvas the loue of these tvvo, and the
 loue of *Ionathan* and *David*, because their loue is
 not grounded vpon temporarie & meere vvorld-
 ly respects, as the loue of others bee; nor vpon
 meere nature, as that of parents and Children;
 but vpon such reasons, as the alteration of out-
 vvard estate here cannot disanull, or make void.
 They loue one another for their graces in hea-
 uenly respects, and therefore by a spirituall bond
 they are vnited in heart, and made one. Thus
 should vvee loue, and thus settle it, that it may
 abide to death: and that vvee may so loue, let
 vs remember, that vve be Children of one Father,
 vvee be brethren, vvee be very members of the
 same body, and Christ Iesus our Head, vvee also
 are here strangers; and if vvee loue not one ano-
 ther, vvho vvill loue vs? for the vvorld hateth vs,
 There be which would be held Christians, and
 yet cannot loue such as be so indeede. *Cain* can-
 not loue *Abel*, though his brother, nor *Esau* a *Ja-
 cob*. Some professe to loue the godly, but it is fi-
 nisterly; not simply for their graces and vertues,
 as *Ruth* here loued *Naomi*, for no other cause of
 loue could there be; for *Ruth* was young, and *Na-
 omi* old, and very poore. What power in nature,
 and vvorldly reason could then leade *Ruth* thus to
 loue *Naomi*? Other some loue them for their ver-
 tues, but their vertues must be such, as must make
 their persons without exception, every way plea-
 sing

2. Sam. 1. 26.

Ioh. 15. 19.

sing to them, else they will fall off from their loue; they cannot, forsooth, beare with infirmities, all must be in perfection. But such doe not looke into themselves with a single eye, or else with too much selfe-love behold themselves: for otherwise they would loue a godly Christian, as such a one, though accompanied with some infirmities, from which in this life none can bee wholly freed.

And there will I be buried.] *Ruth* spoke before of their death, and now of their buriall together: so as neither in life nor death, shee would bee separated from her mother. By this it appeareth,

I. That buriall was a duty performed to the dead then, as now, and therefore shee speaketh of it, as hoping that it would be performed to them, as me alwaies haue done one for another successiue-ly. *Abraham* for *Sarah*; *Isaac* and *Ismael* for *Abraham* their father: so *Esau* and *Jacob* for *Isaac*. Yea wee reade how God himselfe buried *Moses*: and with what solemnities burials were performed, wee may see by the embalming of *Jacob*, and his carrying into Canaan with such troupes, and the mourning there made for him diuers daies. The godly would not neglect this to *Iohn Baptist* beheaded, to *Christ* crucified, and to *Stephen* stoned. It is humanity, it is an honest and good respect vnto the dead, and done by beleeuers also in the hope of the resurrection. It was esteemed a mercy to be buried, and the contrary was threatned as a punishment, as wee may see in 1. King. 13. 14. 2. King.

2. King. 9. 22. and 22. 20. Deut. 28. 26. Ier. 18. Yet we muſt know, that a *Dives* may be buried with pompe, and yet go to hel; and a poore *Lazarus* be exalted to heauen; yea many Saints and Martyrs drowned, torne of beaſts, and burnt to aſhes, yet receiued the crowne of glory: which I ſpeake to ſhew, that although the godly ſhould want buriall, yet that hindereth not their happineſſe.

I I. We may ſee hence, that *the godly and louing friends haue an affection to bee buried together.* *Iacob* would lye where *Abraham* was buried: & the old Prophet would haue his bones laid by the other Prophet. And it was in former times an honour, to bee buried in the Sepulchre of their fathers: And therefore the louing affection of ſuch is not to be blamed as altogether idle & fooliſh, which deſire to be buried by their beloued friends, eſpecially if they were godly and vertuous.

2. Sam. 19. 37.
1. King. 13. 31.

The Lord doe ſo to me, and more alſo. When *Ruth* ſaw *Naomi* ſo earneſt to haue her to returne backe, as ſhee thought, for her better ſatiſfaction and aſſurance, ſhee thus breaketh forth into this ſpeech, aſcertaining her, that her words came frō a true affection and conſtant reſolution of her heart. This is a forme of an oath among the Hebrewes: for ſo it is ſaid, that *Salomon* ſwore, 1. Ki. 2. 23. And thus ſwore *Saul*, 1. Sam. 14. 44. *Jonathan*, 1. Sam. 20. 13. & *Abner*, 2. Sā. 3. 9. & *Dauid*, 2. Sam. 19. 13. but it is not a bare oath, but an execration withall, 1. Sā. 3. 17. Yet is not the curſe particularly named, but left vnto God. Hence we learne,

• I. That it is lawfull to take an oath, Heb. 6. 13.

H

Reue.

Reue. 10. 6. it is warranted, Deut. 6. and a part of Gods worship which he will giue to none other: it is necessary sometime to decide a controuersie, as Exo. 22. 11. and to giue satisfaction and assurance to the mind of others, in great and necessary matters which otherwise would not bee credited, as here; Therefore the Anabaptists erre, which hold it altogether vnlawfull: for it is lawfull to sweare, being thereto called before a Magistrate; so *Abraham* made his seruant to sweare, Gen. 24. and *Asa* made his subiects to take an oath, 2. Chro. 15. so *Ezra*, Chap. 10. and *Nehemiah*, Chap. 13. It is lawfull to sweare for confirmation of a truth in weightie matters one to another, as the spies swore to *Rahab*; *Dauid* and *Jonathan*, one to another; *Dauid* to *Bethsheba*, *Ruth* here to *Naomi*: and Saint *Paul* did often call God to witnesse for the glory of God, and the furtherance of the Gospell. We may therefore lawfully take an oath, so it be *in truth*, not a lye, nor with an equiuocation, or mentall reseruatiō to deceiue; *in righteousness*, that the matter be iust, and *in iudgement*, knowing well the thing, and vpon mature deliberation and settled perswasion of the truth. Beware of common and vsuall swearing, the custome thereof maketh it worse, and proclaimeth the man to be vnreformed in his heart, yea though the thing be true, which he sweareth. A man should be so honest, and his word in such esteeme, as his oath should not neede in ordinary matters; And as we must take heede of common swearing, so when we are to sweare, let it bee *in truth*,

truth, righteouſneſſe and iudgement: take heede of periury, which God wil reuenge, Ezech. 5. Yea he ſweareth to reuenge it, Ezech. 17. 16, 19.

II. That *the godly when they ſwear, they ſwear by God*: if they doe otherwise, it is their fault. When the Angel ſware, Rev. 10. 6. it was by God: ſo was the oath of *Danid*, *Jonathan*, and others: we are taught by God himſelfe, to ſwear by himſelfe, Heb. 6. and this will giue ſatisfaction, for that God can beare witneſſe, and the calling of him to witneſſe, worketh a credit in the party to whom another doth ſwear: ſuch is the reuerence of Gods name in mens hearts. Hee can reuenge periury, and it is his will that wee ſhould ſwear onely by him, Deut. 4. & 10. Exo. 23. We are not therefore to ſwear by falſe gods, as did *Iezabel* by her gods, 1. King 19. Iof. 23. 7. Pſal. 16. 4. Zeph. 1. 5. nor by them that are no Gods, Ier. 5. 7. Amos 8. 14. nor by the creatures, Mat. 5. 35, 36. for ſuch ſwearers take Gods honour from him, and make theſe things by which they ſwear, Idols: they breake the Lords Commandement, and prouoke Gods wrath againſt them. *Ruth* a new Conuert, would not ſwear by the Idols of her countrey: for if ſhee had, it would not haue ſatiſfied *Naomi*, and ſhe had ſhewed, that ſhe had not beene conuerted to the true God; whereas now ſhee declared, that ſhee worſhipped the true God.

III. That *every oath is with an execration, either underſtood, or expreſſed*, as here in generall tearmes, & elſe-where they are conioyned, Neh.

10. 29. for an oath is a calling of God to witnesse in a matter so, as to blesse him, if he speake truth; or to plague him, if hee speake the contrary. This should make men take heede how they do sweare, lest they bring a curse vpon themselves, as did *Zedekiah*; and *Vladislaus*, King of Hungarie, and *Rodolphus*, D. of Sueuia, when he rebelled against *Henry* the Emperour his Lord and master, by the instigation of Pope *Gregory* the seuenth.

IV. That in imprecations and formes of cursing, it is best to passe ouer with silence the special kind of the iudgement, and not to name it, but to leaue that to God, as *Ruth* doth here, and *Salomon*, 1. King. 2. 23. *Saul*, *Jonathan*, *Abner*, *Eli*, & others; and not to say, as now many will, I pray God I may neuer stirre; That I may be hanged; That this bread and drink may neuer goe thorow me; That I may be damned; That the Deuill may fetch mee: and a thousand of such fearefull wishes, too boldly vttered, from a presumptuous spirit, not fearing the terrour of God, especially when wee doe consider what dreadfull examples there haue beene of this kind, that euen as men haue wished, so hath the iudgement false out; and therefore let vs not be rash with our mouthes herein, lest the Lord make vs examples of his iustice.

If I sought but death part thee and mee.] This is that which shee sealeth with an oath, euen to be constant to death; and this is the praise of her action. Many can begin well; but they hold not on to death, as did this *Ruth*. Of constant loue I haue spoken before. Note further, that though nothing else
can

1. Sam. 14. 44.
& 20. 3. and
3. 17.
2. Sam. 3. 9.

See the booke
called the
Theater of
Gods iudgements.

can, yet death will divide friends asunder: therefore *Ruth* doth not except against any thing but death, which cannot be auoided. This will separate *Abraham* and *Sarah*, *Iacob* and *Rachel*, *Aaron* and *Moses*, *Jonathan* and *Dauid*, and this *Ruth* from *Naomi*, but nothing else shall: so firmly are faithfull friends vnited, and made one. I will not complaine here of the leuitie of this age, of the inconstancie of mens hearts, and how for eue-ry trifle, they that seemed to be one, become two of a suddaine, they will preuent death, and seuer themselves before. But so much shall suffice for this verse, and the constant resolution of *Ruth*.

Verle. 18. *When shee saw that shee was stedfastly minded to goe with her, then she left off speaking vnto her.*

HERE is the force and effect of *Ruths* resolution vpon *Naomi*, and withall the very drift of *Naomi* her speeches to *Ruth*, concerning her going backe, only for triall of her constancie; which when shee saw, shee ceased to speake thereof any more vnto *Ruth*. So as here is to be noted: First, the silence of *Naomi*. Secondly, the cause thereof. This is in the first place, the other followeth in the last words of the verse.

When she saw.] That is, when she perceiued her full resolution, then shee admitted of her fellowship, but not before; whence, and from whose wisdom we learne, That the godly wise are warie in their admittance of others into their company, till they

they well know them. Wee see the wisdom of *Nehemiah*, Chap. 6. 2, 11, 12. of *Jacob*, when *Esa* offered him kindnesse, and of *David* towards *Saul*; though he both wept, and spake him faire, hee kept off from him; neither would our Sauour commit himselfe to all his followers, *Ioh. 2. 24.* for mans heart is deceitfull, and a shew may be made of that, which is not in the heart indeede: therefore should wee learne Christs counsell, to be as wise as Serpents, with a Doves innocencie, lest like a well-meaning *Gedaliah* without suspicion of euill in others, because wee intend none euill in our selues, we perish by hypocriticall *Ishmaels*, *Ier. 41. 6.* Let vs in these fraudulent times, trie, know, and so approue and admit, or dislike and leaue men.

That shee was stedfastly minded to goe with her.] This is it which held *Ruths* stedfast spirit; she was not of a light and vnstable heart. But how saue *Naomi* this in her? By *Ruths* constant abyding by her promise expressing her minde, and by her solemne oath confirming the same promise. So then, words with an oath, and actions agreeing, sufficiently may perswade vs of the stedfastnesse of the heart, and the inward disposition of the minde of such as shew themselves vertuous. And with this should wee rest satisfied, as *Naomi* doth here, as it followeth in the next words; for charity bindeth vs to thinke the best of such testimonies, of promises, oathes and actions concurring. True it is, that all these may be feigned: for wicked men will promise, sweare, and in some sort doe, but yet not so,

so, as they bee free from guile therein : they will promise what they truly intend not ; they will sweare, to be the better credited, and lesse distrusted, euen when they meane to deceiue, because they feare not God ; and in some things they will be doing, in such things as may rather delude, than indeede effect what they pretend, but not what they secretly intend. Such Machiauellians, or rather matchlesse villaines there bee in the world. But I spake before of such as feare God, who are to be beleeued, when they take an oath to shew the truth of the heart, in that which they doe speake. But that we may rest satisfied with an oath, wee must obserue these things in the party: first, see to his life, whether such a one feare God; then, whether hee make conscience of an oath, or be an ordinary swearer, not regarding an oath : and thirdly, what doth make him to sweare, whether it be hope of gaine, some coming towards him, or feare, or some suddaine passion, and not a religious ground: as these concur, so may wee belecue, or doubt. The words translated (*was stedfastly minded*) are in Hebrew, *Shee strengthened her selfe*, to wit, by her oath. By which we may learne, that *an oath is the strengthening of the mind of him that swearth to doe that which he hath sworne to doe*; if it bee lawfull, and that the oath was not rashly taken. Thus *Elisba* strengthened himselfe not to leaue *Eliab* till he was taken vp; and *Michaiab* to performe faithfully his ministerie, before and vnto *Abab*, when he came thither, where he was. And this is lawfull some-

time in great and weighty affaires. Wherein wee may feare the fainting of our hearts, then with prayer to God to vow our obedience, and if iust cause require, to vvitnesse by oath our resolution, as *Ruth* doth here, and the rest beforenamed. But when we haue sworne lawfully, then let vs looke to it, that we doe not breake it, *Pfal.* 15. *Iosh.* 9. 19. for God will require it at our hands, except it be like *Herods* oath; it is then better broken, and to be repented of, rather than kept.

Then she left speaking vnto her.] To wit, of her returning backe againe, and of willing her to goe after *Orpha* vnto her owne Countrey and people; and she left off, because she saw that *Ruth* was resolved to go with her, without sinister and by-respects, for that *Ruth* could not by such reasons as she had laid before her, be made to depart from her, being an old poore woman and stranger, albeit *Orpha* did leaue her. So then hence note, that there is no reason to make further triall, where an honest resolution is, or may be well discerned: for this were folly, and also vncharitablenesse, to call still into question that which is out of question, and to suspect an honest mind, which fully sheweth it selfe, as far as it can for the present. Let vs then learne this wisdom, so to trie before we trust, and then to trust after sound triall; for this is the end thereof. Againe, where we see the mind settled to well-doing, let vs not put it to further triall then neede is, lest we doe weaken the parties faith, and bring the mind into wauering, but leaue him to his honest resolution, *Act.* 21. 14. *1. Cor.* 16. 12.

Verfe

Verse 19. *So they two went untill they came to Bethlehem: and it came to passe, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the Citie was moued about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?*

IN the sixth verse they tooke their iourney, and after stood parleying by the way; now they goe forward till they came to the end thereof; so as here is shewed how long they did iourney, and whither, and then what was the euent when they came there.

So they two went untill they came to Bethlehem. When Naomi had tried her, she tooke her to her, and so shee poore woman returneth into her Countrey, left of all except this one; shee was forsaken, but not of all; one goeth with her, and they two poore women goe together, and left not off, till they did come vnto Bethlehem. Whence obserue,

I. That they are to bee admitted into our fellowship, whom wee find to be constant in a good course, and true louers of goodnesse, whatsoeuer they were before. Naomi thus admits of Ruth. no doubt, with great comfort. Thus Paul alloweth of Marke, 2. Tim. 4. 11. though before hee had refused him, A& 15. 38. and willeth others to entertaine him, Col. 4. 10, 11. For thus Gods Angels deale with vs; they will account vs their fellow-seruants when we turne to God, though before we were neuer so lewd, yea they will reioyce ouer vs, and will louingly attend vs: let vs then admit of such, as God also

also himselfe doth accept of vs.

II. That *God leaueth not his in distresse, or altogether comfortlesse.* Naomi went out with husband and children, and lost them: shee returneth not alone, but God sent her one to accompany her, and to comfort her. And where mans company to helpe and comfort faileth, there God will send his Angels, as with *Iacob* in his trauell to Mesopotamia, and with the three children in the Fornace; Yea God will stand by *Paul*, when all men forsake him, 2. Tim. 4. because hee knoweth our frailty and weakenesse, and therefore will not leaue his altogether comfortlesse, that their faith should not faile: which to thinke vpon, is not a small comfort vnto Gods people in their affliction and troubles.

III. That *a true resolution will shew it selfe in a full execution.* Shee resolved to goe with *Naomi*, and so shee did, till shee came to *Bethlehem*. *Iacob* vowed, and so resolved in his returne from Mesopotamia, to build an Altar to God at *Bethel*, and so he did, Gen. 18, and 35. Yet this is so to be vnderstood, if forcible impediments hinder not, as we may see in *Pauls* will to goe to the *Thessalonians*, which yet he did not then, because *Satan* hindered him, 1. Thes. 2. 18. By this may we learne to know the difference betweene solid resolutions and suddaine flashes, raw and vndigested purposes, betweene true resolutions, and such as be made in shew, but in substance proue nothing so, neuer seene in the effects.

IV. In this their trauell to Canaan, and therein

in to Bethlehem, note three things: their *vnity*, *feruencie*, and *constancie*; they went together lovingly, they ceased not to goe on, they did not linger, they tooke no by-paths, neither forgate they whither they were going, till they came vnto Bethlehem in Canaan. As these thus went to Canaan, so should we vnto the spirituall Canaan, and heauenly Bethlehem: we must goe in vnity, 1. Cor. 1. 10. and be of one heart, A. 1. 14. and 2. 1, 46. and 4. 24. in a godly seruency, Rom. 12. 11. Tit. 2. 14. Ezech. 3. 14. as *Eliab*, *Nebemiah*, the Angel of Ephesus, Reuel. 2. 1, 2. and as our Saviour, whom the zeale of Gods house had eaten vp. And we must goe in a constant Spirit, and not be weary of well-doing, Gal. 6. for he that continueth to the end, shall be saued. To conclude the obseruations from these words, note how Bethlehem, the house of bread, yea Canaan, a land flowing with milke and hony, and no lacke in it, Deut. 7. 8, 9. and 11. 9, 11, 12. and 27. 3. was made so barren, as *Naomi* was faine to goe into Moab for reliefe, and yet now is made fruitfull againe, answerable to the name. Whence see, how *the Lord can make a fruitfull land barren*, Psal. 107. 33, 34. *for the sinnes of the people, and againe can turne barrennesse into plenty, of his mercy and goodnesse*, Psal. 107. 35, 36. Therefore to haue the continuance of Gods mercies, take heede of sin: when we enioy them, prayse him for them; & when we be in scarcitie, seeke to him, because God can helpe, Psal. 65. 10, 11, 12. and he hath promised to giue a blessing, Esay 41. 17, 18. 2. Chron. 7. 14. and be-
ware.

ware of murmuring in want, 1. Cor. 10. remember there the iudgement: yet is this a common thing amongst vs now a dayes, vpon any vnseasonable weather, or worldly crosses, to repine, which yet easeth vs nothing, but doth the more prouoke God to punish vs.

And it came to passe, when they were come to Bethle- hem.] These words are a repetition of the former words immediately before. Thus plainly speaketh the Holy Ghost, declaring the matter not in curiousnesse of speech, but in euidence of the truth.

That all the city was moued about them.] That is, All the Inhabitants of the City. A figuratiue speech, as in Mat. 2. 3. There was a generall coming together to see them. Such a mouing is sometime for feare, Mat. 2. 3. sometime for ioy, 1. King. 1. 45. Mat. 21. 10. and of a wonderment, A& 2. 6. All this noteth, that *Naomi* was not an obscure person before, but a woman of fame before shee went; and therefore was this obseruation of her returne, when shee now was come to Bethlehem. By which we may vnderstand, that *the more renowned any be in prosperity, the more remarkable are they in a downefall and in aduersity.* This experience sheweth to be true among our selues, by very late instances; for the eminency of such in prosperity haue the eyes of many vpon them, friends, enemies, equals; one sort looks on with loue, another with hatred, the last with enuie and disdaine; and as they be affected in a mans dayes of prosperity, so will they speake and shew

shew fully themselves in aduersity. This should make such as be set out so to the view of men, to behaue themselves wisely in euery estate, seeing they be so obseruable.

Is this Naomi?] There be three opinions of this, and it may be, that the company being mixt and of all sorts, they might speake the same words, but with differing minds. Some thinke the words spoken in contempt, *Is this Naomi?*] Shee that was so faire and full, is shee now brought downe? If this may stand, we see, that *powerty bringeth contempt euen vpon the best.* So was *Iob* contemned by base fellowes, Chap. 30. 1, 11. So was *Dauid* of *Nabal*, of *Shemei*, yea our Saviour vpon the crosse. *Salomon* speaketh of the poore as subiect to scorne and contempt, Prou. 17. 5. and 19. 4. which commeth through the want of heauenly wisdom, Prou. 11. 12. the want of Gods feare, *Iob* 6. 14. and because men in prosperity are proud, and doe sinisterly interpret of such as be in aduersity. Doth aduersity bring contempt? Then let vs take heed how by our owne prodigality, folly, and wickednesse, we bring euill vpon our selues; if it be the immediate hand of God, and not thy fault, thou shalt be censured, as *Iob* was; how much more, when the cause is apparently from thy selfe? Againe, let men in aduersity prepare to beare contempt; and not be impatient, nor take it to heart; for *Iob*, *Dauid*, *Christ Iesus* suffered it patiently. If men learne not patience in this, it will make them lay violent hands vpon themselves, as *Saul*, who could not indure

endure contempt, and therefore would preuent it by killing himselfe: for impatient proud hearts take contempt in aduersity, to be worse to them then death it selfe. Indeed to mocke or despise the miserable, is an argument of the want of Gods feare, and that such are vncharitable, cruell, and void of mercy, for whom there remaineth iudgement mercilesse; yet howsoeuer the wickedly proud behaue themselues we must in aduersity be content. Some thinke the words to be spoken with admiration, Is this *Naomi*! as if it had beene said, Oh what an alteration is here! And so taking the words, we learne, that *strange alterations in mens estates, make people to wonder whether it be in prosperity or aduersity, for good or euill in any quality.* The wise and learned friends of *Iob* were astonished at the change of his estate. *Sauls* conuersion was wondred at, 1. Sam. 10. 11. So the gifts of the Apostles and miracles, A& 2. 7. and 4. 13. and Christs wisdome and learning being but twelue yeeres old; for men are more carryed away with the consideration of the outward meanes how things came topasse, then of the power and pleasure of God to make such an alteration. Therefore in great alterations looke for wonderings, and take no offence thereat; for it is mans nature so to doe at vnusuall things: yea it is a certaine corruption and folly in the vulgar sort, who consider not the causes of things. It could not but somewhat moue *Naomi*, to see such a concourse of people to come to wonder and gaze vpon them, as people doe at strangers, or at others in a changeable

able estate, euen among our selues. But these fol-
lies of people wee must passe by. Some thinke the
words to be vttered from pittie and commiserati-
on towards her, as if it had beene said, Is this *Na-
omi*? Alas, what a change is in her? This is that
good woman *Naomi*, whom wee cannot yet for-
get, though in her estate shee bee much altered.
And it is most like they spake in loue and com-
passion, rather than in contempt, because shee
was the kinswoman of the chiefest man among
them, who, it seemeth, esteemed much of her: for
hee entertained *Ruth* kindly for her sake, Chap. 2.
6, 11. and sent her corne, Chap. 3. 17. likewise
the women spoke after very comfortably to her,
Chap. 4. 14, 16. neither doth *Naomi* taxe them
for contemning her, but rather answereth to their
esteeme of her name from her former estate: and
therefore this being vttered from their loue, and
pittie, and good respect towards her, as being a
grace fit for Gods people to shew to them which
are in aduersitie, wee learne: That *good and godly
people doe nothing lesse esteeme of the vertuous, for
their outward low estate and pouerty.* These call her
still *Naomi*, and so acknowledge her; and *Boaz* e-
steemed vvell of her, euen in this poore estate:
Jonathan did nothing lesse esteeme of *Dauid*, be-
cause hee was out of the Kings fauour: neither
did *Ioseph* of Arimathea lesse reuerence or honor
Iesus Christ, because he was condemned and ex-
ecuted as a malefactor among theeues: for out-
ward crosles, afflictions and miseries of this life,
are no staine to true piety, when the crosles fall
vpon

vpōn good men for righteousnesse sake, or for the triall of their faith & patience. Let vs not then, for outward aduersitie, like the godly worse, when wee haue loned them, or made shew of loue in their prosperity, but in aduersitie shew greater tokens of loue; and doe not as *Iobs* friends, sit downe and censure him; nor as Christs friends, and Saint *Pauls*, which forsooke them in their troubles. An healthfull member of the body is beloued, but when it is in distresse, then loue of all the rest of the members most sheweth it selfe: and should not our loue appeare to the godly in aduersity, which be members with vs of the same body in Christ?

Verse 20. *And shee said vnto them, Call mee not Naomi; call me Marah: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.*

THIS is *Naomi* her answer vnto the multitude, flocking about her, calling her *Naomi*, continuing a dissuasion for so calling her, and shewing what name they shoud giue her, with the reason thereof, drawne from her present poore estate; which shee setteth out partly in this verse, and partly in the next.

And shee said vnto them, Call mee not Naomi.] This name signifieth pleasant and merry, which in her aduersity shee thought did not besit her, and therefore shee did not reioyce in it. *Aduersitie maketh the afflicted nothing to regard worldly names and titles of a better condition and estate; while*

while they be in miserie, and haue lost their former outward comforts, if they be wise and truly humbled; for such as be humbled indeed, are not vainely in loue with goodly names and titles, to which their estate is not answerable. Which checketh the foolish pride of such, as being in a base beggerly condition, liuing almost of almes, hanging vpon this and that friend, yet forsooth, will brag of their name, their house, and Gentility, or rather indeed, to call it, as they make it, Gentilisme, through their lewd and vaine conuersation.

Call me Marah.] That is, bitter, one in a heauie and distressed estate. *The truly humbled desire to be accounted as they be, and not as they be not;* as Naomi here is willing to be called *Marah*, because her estate was answerable. Shee was not proud, shee submitted her selfe to Gods hand, and therefore shee refused not a name according to the nature of her present condition. Whose humility may checke the pride of such as would haue better names then they deserue, seeking the name of *Goodman*, when goodnesse is farre from them; of *Master*, when their Gentlemanship did hardly creepe out of a dunghill; of worshipfull Esquire, right worshipfull, & many such vaine titles, which euery Vpstart now in these dayes doe eagerly affect, not for any desert of vertue, but for that they haue gottē some money to put to vsurie, or procured some office basely by their money, or a little better outward estate by illiberall and base scraping, pinching, and niggardly sparing, or

by depending vpon some person in authority, by whose countenance they may domineere ouer their poore neighbours, or by some such way and meanes, whereof this now present age affordeth instances enow; yet are such farre enough off from the true causes of Gentrie, worship, and due honor. This good womans humility and patience, may also checke the pride and impatiencie of such as cannot endure a name like their nature; they can be content to be Vsurers, but not so to be called; they can liue as Misers, but will not so be accounted; the denomination from their sinnefull practices is worse to them, then the sinnes which they doe commit; for that they more are touched with the shame of the euill before men, then with the offence thereby committed against God. Here it may be demanded, Whether any may be called by any other name then formerly they haue beene called by? We see here that *Naomi* would be called *Marah*; *Iacob* was after called *Israel*; *Abram*, *Abraham*; *Sarah* *Sarai*; and many such instances in Scripture; as *Saul* called after *Paul*, & *Ioseph* called *Barnabas*: which may be to expresse some grace in them, for which they be praise-worthy; as *Iacob* being called *Israel*, because he wraisted and preuailed with God, so *Ioses* called *Barnabas*, the sonne of consolation, for his rare loue to the Church, and for giuing such an example thereof to the Apostles: *Simon* must be called *Peter* for his constancie. So to expresse some notorious euill, on the other side *Barjesus* was called *Elymas*, and *Pasbur* must be

Act. 1. 23.

Act. 4. 36.

Act. 13. 6, 8.
Ier. 20. 3.

be named *Magor-Missabib*. And we see by ancient practice, for greater honour men were called by other names, then from their fathers families, which they purchased as a title of their honour, & for the reward of vertue, to encourage men to noble archiuevements worthy of honour, being by others put vpon them for the praise of their vertues, without flatterie and vaine glory, and some names also were inuented for disgrace of vice, in such as deserued the same, but they also without scorne, derision, malice, and euill will to the party, otherwise then to beate him out from his sinne, which may not be for such sinne as he committeth of infirmitie, but for open and notorious enormities, and from which he will not be hardly reclaýmed without some note of infamy.

For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.] The reason why shee would be called *Marah*, because of her bitter affliction which the Lord Almighty hath laid vpon her. Whence we may learne these lessons,

I. That *the Lord is Almighty*, Gen. 17.1. for he can doe what he will in heauen and in earth, Psa. 115. 3. This should worke confidence in his Word, for what he saith, he will doe, he can doe, his power can effect it. This must make vs humble our selues vnder his mightie hand, 1. Pet. 5. 6. he is able to destroy and cast into Hell, Mat. 10. 28. By this let vs be encouraged to doe what he commandeth: for he can beare vs out in it, and can supply our wants, 2. Cor. 9. 7, 8. Hence may we gather comfort against all that rise vp against vs

As with the
Romans:
Cato Censorius,
Scipio africanus,
Emilius
Macedonicus,
Antoninus Pi-
us, &c.

for the Lords cause: for he is greater then all, Iohn 10.39. And we may, to conclude, learne to hope well of others, though they haue long gone astray: for God is able to saue them, Rom. 11.23.

I I. That *the Almighty can alier an estate into the cleane contrarie*; as *Naomi* into *Marah*, mirth into mourning, sweet into sowre, honor into dishonor; and contrarily, heauinesse into ioy, disgrace into high esteeme, and so forth; as we may see in *Iobs* downefall, and also raising vp againe; in *Hamans* honour, into extreme contempt; in *Mordecaies* base estate, into great dignitie; so in *Iosephs* exaltation likewise and in many others: for euery mans estate is in the Lords hand to alter it at his will, 1. Sā. 2. 7, 8. Let none be proud in their prosperitie, for God can cast the downe. See it in *Hamman*, *Nebuchadnezer*, *Balthasar*, and *Herod*, whom God made spectacles of his displeasure for abusing their prosperitie, as we haue examples of late among our selues. And as prosperitie should not make vs proud, because God can cast vs downe: so aduersity should not make vs despaire, because God can raise vs vp, as he did *Iob*, *Ioseph*, and *Mordecai*.

I I I. That *the godly feelee a bitter taste in their afflictions*, they are distastfull vnto the; for no affliction is ioyous for the present, which maketh infirmities appeare in the best in time of their troubles, as we may see in *Iob*, *Ieremie*, & *Hannah*. For none, euen of the Saints of God, are perfitt in faith, loue, patience, & other vertues, which might make vs endure afflictions quietly: And therefore we are not

1. Pet. 1. 7.
Heb. 12. 11.

Ier. 30. 12,
14. 15.
1. Sam. 1.

not to maruell when we heare words of impatiencie come from weake men, nor sit downe and censure them, but to iudge charitably, though they cannot beare afflictions altogether with chearefulnesse, quietly and without struggling: For though the Spirit be willing, yet flesh and bloud are weake, and euen the best manifest their weakenesse, and the bitter taste which they haue of affliction.

Verse 21. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home againe empty: Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

NAOMI goeth on in her speech to the people, so speaking of her, as is before noted, first shewing how the Lord had dealt bitterly with her, and then why they should not call her *Naomi*, for that the Lord had testified against her, and afflicted her: thus shee complaineth and amplifieth the same by contraries.

I went out full.] Shee here speaketh of her former estate, when shee went from among Gods people. The word is taken from a full vessell; and this is to be vnderstood of her outward estate, in which shee felt no want, no more then there is want in a full vessell; for shee had an husband and two sonnes, and no doubt other things sufficient: for the words imply shee went not for want, but for feare of want. If the words be vnderstood of her fulnesse in her husband and children, it

Ecclef. 4. 8.

Ecclef. 5. 10.

noteth, that a good woman feeleth no want, while she hath a louing husband and obedient children; for she taketh such contentment in them, as shee cannot feelee want; neither will such an husband and children see her to want. When women are thus happy, let them blesse God for their full estate. If the words be vnderstood of fulnesse for outward things withall, and yet could not abyde at home, wee may learne, that in present fulnesse and plenty there may want contentment, either through a greedy desire which neuer hath enough, or through a distrustfull heart fearing to want, with which these were so troubled, as it made the leaue Gods people for sauing of their goods, and to goe among heathen Idolaters: For whither will not distrust of God, and loue of riches, leade men? They erre therefore, which being in a poore estate, thinke contentment to be found in riches, and fullnesse of these earthly things, when Salomon telleth vs the contrarie, and daily experience from the Rich and wealthy of the world doth apparently shew it.

And the Lord hath brought me home againe empty. It is not said that the Lord sent her out full, but shee went out of her selfe, and he brought her home againe, but yet empty, shee lost what shee hoped to keepe. This good woman in this speech giueth vs to know, that shee tooke notice of a fault in voluntarily leauing Gods people, to saue her goods, for which the Lord corrected her, yet in mercy brought her home againe, though with losse. Note hence these things:

I. That it is a fault, voluntarily for safety of goods through distrust, to leaue Gods people, and goe to liue among Idolaters; for such loue their bodies better then their soules, they expose themselues to great dangers, and deprive themselues of the publike and ordinary meanes of life and saluation. If such haue warrant, as the woman had by *Elisha*; they may haue hope: but if they, voluntarily distrusting God, take such a course, they may rather looke for a curse, then expect a blessing.

2. King. 8. 1, 2.

II. That there is no certainty in worldly wealth: For here is mention of fulnesse and emptinesse in *Naomi*; and this may we see in the former examples of *Iob*, of *Haman*: so in *Salomon* and his sonne *Rehoboam*, in *Babylon* and *Tyre*; for the preseruacion of outward estates, is not in the hands of the possessours, nor within their power, but in God who is the Giuer: and againe, man in his abundance doth forget God, and so causeth the Lord to take it from them, as he did the Kingdome from *Saul*; the tenne Tribes from *Salomons* house, the gouernement from *Ieroboam*, and the Empire from *Belshazzar*. Wee are not then to set our hearts on our outward prosperity, *Psal. 62. 10.* neither to glory in our riches: for outward glory is but as a fading flowre, and as the warme sunshine in a cold winter day, soone gone, and all the delight thereof.

Esay 23. 9.
Ezec. 27. 2, 27.

Ier. 9. 23.

III. That ostentimes the way and meanes which men take to preuent want, by the same they bring it upon them, as it fell out here with *Naomi*, whose husband left Gods people, to goe into *Moab*, to

saue their estate, and there lost all, so as *Naomi* returneth home in very great want, who went out full. The like befell *Lot* in leauing *Abraham* for this worldly goods, and going to dwell in *Sodom*, where he left and lost all, and was glad to escape with his life: for if the meanes we vse be not good, it is farre from helping or preserving vs, as by Gods cursing thereof, it turneth to our ruine; for *Ieroboam* by his policie lost his kingdome. Therefore in seeking to vphold, or to get an estate, looke to the meanes whether good or euill, lest we come short of that we doe looke for. It is ill to leaue the meanes of the soules safety, for these worldly commodities; after which we must not make haste, lest we come to want; neither may we vse vnlawfull courses to get them: for the treasures of wickednesse profit not, but shall come to an ill end; as they are gotten, so in time commonly are they spent.

IV. That such of Gods children as goe astray, he will bring home againe, but yet with correction, as he here doth *Naomi*; and as he did the Prodigall sonne: which he doth in mercy, to make them to know their error, and to walke afterwards more warily. It is comfort that God will in mercy seeke vp his children, and not lose one of them; but yet feare to goe astray: for surely he will scourge them for their outroads, when he bringeth them home, though it be a *Dauid*, a *Iehoshaphat*, or a *Iosias*.

Why then call ye me Naomi?] Hence learne, that the humbled and afflicted take no pleasure to be

Pro. 21. 5. and
28. 22.

Pro. 21. 6. 7. &
10. 3.

Luk. 15. 4.
Iohn 17.

be remembered of their former prosperity by names and titles; for it but increaseth sorrow, and affordeth no comfort. What comfort might it be to tell *Haman* of his former honor, when he was going to hanging? What ioy to *Herod* to heare of his glory & the applauding of him before, when now the iudgement was vpon him, and he eaten with wormes, for his vaine glory and pride? The afflicted are not hereby comforted, for *Naomi* taketh no pleasure in that name, whilst she is by her estate *Marah*. It is in vaine to mention to the heauie-hearted what they haue beene, except vpon certaine hope of recouerie to the same againe; but their sorrow must be eased by better meanes of comfort, by shewing them the cause, the end, and benefit of Gods Fatherly chastisements, and so forth.

Seeing the Lord hath testified against mee.] Note hence:

I. That mans comfort is nothing able to allay the bitternesse of Gods discomforts vpon vs. Their calling her *Naomi* could doe her no good, while she knew her selfe called by the Lord, *Marah*, and whilst hee did witnesse against her. What can it profit a woman of place, whilst she is in the bitternesse of her soule, and afflicted by some grievous crosse, to be called Lady, Madame, and to be spoken vnto with tearmes of honour, whilst vnder Gods hand? This should make the greatest therefore take more delight in seeking to please God, and to enioy his fauour and countenance, than to be dignified with the most highest titles:

titles: for these will afford no comfort, when God will not afford it.

I I. That afflictions are commonly the Lords witnessses against vs, for some thing amisse in vs: for the first cause of them is sinne, and the Lord threatneth them for sin, which the godly in affliction apply vnto themselues. In affliction let vs search out our waies and repent of our sinnes, as did David, Rehoboam, and as the Parable of the prodigall sonne teacheth, and the exhortations, to repentance vpon the Lords afflicting of his people. We may not be like those in Ezechiels daies, who murmured against the Lords hand vpon them, as not being the guilty parties, but that others had sinned, and they vniustly punished.

Ezech. 18. 2.

And the Almighty hath afflicted me.] This sheweth how God did witnesse against her, euen by afflicting her. He witnesseth against vs by his Word written, by his Messengers expounding and applying the Word, by our own consciences accusing, and by his corrections, and rod punishing. By all which waies God speaketh actually vnto vs, for our amendment; and the godly heare him speake vnto them; they together with the correction, applying the Word vnto themselues for their instruction, doe make the affliction profitable vnto them. The conclusion which hence I will note, is this: That the godly doe ascribe all their afflictions to the Lord, as Naomi doth here, and as Iob did, Chap. 1. and 6. 4. and 30. 11. because they know that nothing is by chance, but by his providence, Amos 3. 6. 2. Chro. 15. 6. Esay. 45. 7.

Things

Things fall not out by meere naturall causes, Iob 5.6. but as the Lord will. And therefore should we learne patience, seeing that afflictions come from God. This did worke patience in *Ioseph*, in *Iob*, and in *Dauid*; and so it will in all such as feare the Lord, and submit themselues to his good will and pleasure, as our Sauour did in the Garden, saying to his Father; *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

Gen. 45. 7.

Iob. 1.

2. Sam. 16. 11.

Mat. 26. 39.

Verse 22. So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabiteffe her daughter in law with her, which returned out of the Countrey of Moab: and they came to Bethlechem in the beginning of Barley harvest.

THE conclusion of this Chapter, and an introduction into that which followeth. This is a brieve summe of their iourney, shewing who, from whence, whither, and at what time of the yeere it was.

So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabiteffe her daughter in law with her, which returned out of the Countrey of Moab, and they came to Bethlechem. Of *Naomi* and *Ruth*, and their louing iourneying together before hath beene spoken. Yet note how the holy Ghost, in naming *Ruth*, omitteth not to shew againe her Countrey, and that shee was a Moabiteffe, and not an Israeliteffe by birth, and but daughter in law to *Naomi*, yet she came with her to Bethlechem, and that in safety. Whence note,

I. That grace can unite, where all outward meanes are

are rather hinderances than furtherances thereto, as country, education, & age. *Ruth* was of *Moab*, (he was otherwise brought vp than *Israelites* were, as a *Moabite* woman; shee was young, and *Naomi* old, and but daughter in law to *Naomi*, yet shee held on to the end. Labour wee for grace, which can make vs good, and acceptable to God, what otherwise shall bee wanting vnto vs in worldly respects.

Gen. 28. 15.

II. That they trauell safely, whom God conducteth; for *Naomi* saith before, that the Lord brought her home; and here is shewed their Countrey. So *Jacob* passed well on to *Mesopotamia*, and returned with safety, because God was with him. So did *Israel* iourney to *Canaan*, in which they were safely seated, because the Lord was with them. For he loveth those whom he taketh care of, he neuer slumbreth nor sleepeeth, and hee is almighty, ever present also to helpe them. Let vs then get him for our Guide. And this wee shall doe, if we vndertake a lawfull iourney, if we pray with *Moses*, that the Lords presence would goe with vs, and beleue, as he hath promised, that he will neither faile vs, nor forsake vs.

III. That such as be assent to their iourney, and desire to come to the end, make no outroads. These came from *Moab* to *Bethlehem*, they had no idle vagaries that we read of. Old *Naomi* desired to see her countrey, and young *Ruth* was not wantonly disposed, but constantly kept her company. These two may bee types of the beleeuers, Iew and Gentile traueilling to heauen, and may teach

vs

vs to attend our iourney, and beware of by-paths, and idle outgoings, but to keepe on straight, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, but to remoue our feet from euill.

In the beginning of barley harvest.] This circumstance of the time and season, doth argue the truth of the Story, for shewing the certainty of that, which *Naomi* had heard before, verse 6. and also to be an introduction to that which followeth in the next chapter. This harvest was in part of March, and part of Aprill: for so much sooner is harvest there than here. This harvest time is that, which is the time promised to all the earth, Gen. 8. but yet not at one time to all. Now note here this vvith verse. 6. and we may see that harvest is called Gods visiting his people with bread. Whence we learne, That *harvest is Gods blessing in his mercy giuing bread to sustaine mans life.* This is his common blessing, Gen. 8. 22. and promised to the obedient with plenty, Leu. 26. 5, 10. for times and seasons are in the Lords hand; and this time is the appointed time to reape and gather in the corne for food, by which man liueth. Therefore first, let vs acknowledge God, to be the Lord of the harvest, as hee calleth himselfe, and confesse this blessing to be from him. Secondly, to pray to him for it, seeing it is from him. Thirdly, to be thankfull when wee enioy this blessing, and to pay the due allotted for the Lords seruice in testimony of thanks. In old time none appeared before the Lord empty. Fourthly, to labour diligently at this time, seeing it is the appointed time

Mat. 9.

Psal. 147. 14.
Psal. 144. 13.
Exo. 23. 16.
and 34. 23.
Deut. 16. 16,
17.
Pro. 10. 5. &
6 8.

to

Deut. 28.
Ioel. 1. 11, 12.
2. Sam. 12. 17.
Pro. 26. 1.

to gather in Gods blessings: and be not slothfull, the Ant will teach thee diligence. Fifthly, to take it as a punishment from God, when this haruest is taken from vs, which is done diuers waies, as by cursing the fruit that it prosper not, or by sending vnseasonable weather to destroy the fruits. Lastly, note hence, that it was in the very beginning of Barley haruest, which was before their Wheate haruest, for they had both wheate haruest, as Gen. 30. 14. and 15. 1. and heere Barley haruest, and this also first, as 2. Sam. 21. 9, 10. So that *Nagomi* neglected no time, but tooke the very beginnning, as soone as euer shee heard of the Lords gracious visitation and mercy towards her people. Thus can wee prouide for the body; let vs care also for the soule, that it want not the foode which endureth to eternall life. And thus much for this first chapter.

CHAP. II.



His Chapter setteth out how *Ruth* was intertaind after shee came among God people, how shee behaued her selfe, and what fauour she found at the hands of the chiefeest man of the place, where shee abode with her mother in law.

Verse

Verse 1. *And Naomi had a kinsman of her husbands, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz.*

Here is the party set out, whom God in his secret counsel had provided for *Ruth*, who is described by his affinity with *Naomi*, & how that was, then by his wealth, next, by his family, and lastly, by his name; the drift is, to declare, what moued so great a man to shew such kindnesse to *Ruth* a stranger, and a poore woman.

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husbands.] *Naomi* was not basely married, but to one of an honourable stocke, though now growne poore; yet this her affinity brought *Boaz* to haue a good respect vnto *Ruth*, euen for kindred sake, and therefore are these words set downe, as is before noted. Here obserue,

I. That rich and poore may be nigh of kin. *Naomi* had a great wealthie man to her kinsman, by her husband, and that very nigh too, Chap. 3. 1. for diuersity of outward estates doth not alter blood and kindred, though it make a change in their persons. Let not therefore the rich disdain their poore kindred: for pouertie is no disgrace where there is not want of honesty: Christ was poore, and very poore, liuing of the almes of others. God chooseth his people of such, Iam. 2. None but haue poore kindred, and the best haue in some of their forefathers beene meane enough.

• II. That euen kindred either is, or should be of force.

2. Sam. 5. 1.

force to moue kinsfolke to respect one another. This is gathered hence, for that the scope of these words is to shew how *Boaz* came to respect *Ruth*, which was for Kindred sake, yet chiefly for her vertues, as after shall be shewed; and for loue of kindred, see it in *Rahab*, Iosh. 2. 13. and in the Sichemites, Iudg. 9. 3. though in other respects, in their choosing of *Abimelech*, they were not to be commended. See this also in *Samsons* friends, Iudg. 16. in *Cornelius* to his friends, Act. 10. 24. For kindred are bone of bone, as the *Israelites* spake of *Dauid*, and are as the branches from one roote, and as members of one body, and therefore must loue one another; which reproueth this age, which careth not for their kindred, except they bee rich, vvhich is the sinne of vnnaturalnesse, 2. Tim. 3.

A mighty man of wealth. Yet also a godly man, as appeareth by his godly behauior, his speeches, his vvorkes of mercy, his praising vertue in others, and his obedience vnto Gods Law, in taking *Ruth* to vvife. We see then, that *a wealthy man may be a godly man sometime*. Such a vvealthy man vvas *Abraham*: so *Isaac*, *Iacob*, *Iob*, and *Ioseph* of *Arimathea*: for goods and graces are not in themselves opposite, being both the gifts of God; the one may helpe the other, grace to guide and dispose vvell of goods, and goods vvell vsed, to declare and set forth the graces of the heart in almesdeeds, in maintenance of Gods Word, and in doing other Christian duties: grace humbleth, vvhere riches vvould puffe vp, yet riches vvell vfed bring grace in estimation before men, for they
inable

inable men to shew forth godlinesse, & to passe on their time with the more comfort, and to countenance and defend their poore Christian brethren in well-doing. Therefore if grace and goods goe together, thou hast great cause to blesse God: for it is a most happy estate, to bee rich towards the world, and to God too, to bee rich body and soule: But although this is a very rare estate, yet wee see that they may meete together, and therefore we may not thinke, that he which is rich, cannot be religious. True it is, that it is hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdome of heauen; but it is not impossible. If any aske mee why so few are rich which be godly? I answer, Because the Lord chooseth most of such as be poore, for his people; these make conscience of getting goods, and will not follow the way of euill men and worldlings, to enrich themselues, neither will the Lord make many of them rich, lest they should waxe in their wealth proud, and forgetfull of God, as men in their abundance do. Why, will some say, are most rich men hardly religious? Because God chooseth few of them, they be taken vp with the cares of this life, which choaketh the seede of the Word in them; they set their hearts vpon their riches, as they see them encrease, and are wholly taken vp therewith, so as they cannot set their mindes on better things. Lastly, they make riches their God, so as they cannot serue God, because they serue Mammion.

And of the family of Elimelech. So as Boaz and hee were both of one house and stocke, and very

Eccles. 5. 30.

Luk. 18. 24. 25.

1. Cor. 1. 26.

Mat. 13.

Mark. 10. 17.

Num. 1. 7, 16.
& 2. 3, 27.
Ecclef. 5. 14.

nobly borne both of them, Chap. 4. 20, 21. yet *Elimelech* poore, and his wife in a very meane estate: so as wee hence may see, That *parents* may provide for posterity, but which of their children shall be rich, which poore, is of Gods disposing, and not of mans forecast; as wee may see in these two, whose Ancestor *Nahshon* was the Prince of Iudah, the Royall Tribe, and ruled ouer 74000. men of war, or was fit for it. Thus parents may haue a goodly portion, when some of theirs may haue nothing left them. For riches are Gods gift, he can bestow them, and he can take them away againe, which *Iob* acknowledged. If parents cannot make their children rich, then let them not with too much care vex themselves for them: let them not think that by their scraping together, they can make them wealthy after them; that is Gods blessing; that is his mercy; for if he blesse it not, Oh how soone is that consumed by children, which parents got with great labour and care, and perhaps with an ill conscience too, which procured the curse, besides much infamy and hatred of men in their life time! Is it not madnesse in parents to damne themselves, in hope to make their children great, seeing they cannot effect what they strue for, except God bee so pleased to haue it? And then heere let children looke vp to God, and learne to feare him, and rest not in their parents gettings, but rather let them set themselves to honest callings, and learne how to bee able honestly and frugally to manage that which shall be giuen to them, that when they shall haue such goods

goods and lands in their hands, which their parents shall leaue them, they may the better be able to employ them, and so preferue vvifely that which is befallen vnto them: For let parents get what they can, if they leaue their children without callings, idly brought vp, to goe brauely, and to follow the loose wayes of most rich mens children in these dayes, as not knowing any thing, but how to play the Gentlemen, as they call it; a consumption will soone sease vpon all, and turne them out of all, and they become beggers, as dayly experience sheweth.

[*And his name was Boaz.*] This is added for more certaine knowledge of the party her kinsman; circumstances make Histories more credible, and therefore are they expressed. This name signifieth [*strength or fortitude*] whose sonne he was, and of what house he came, is noted afterwards in the end of the fourth chapter.

Verse 2. *And Ruth the Moabiteffe said vnto Naomi, Let me now goe to the field, and gleane eares of corne after him, in whose sight I shall find grace. And shee said vnto her, Goe, my daughter.*

THIS verse is a request made, and sheweth, first, of whom it is made: then, to whom, and for what, with the graunt thereunto, as is apparent by the words: The scope is to shew how *great things come to passe by poore and unlikely beginnings*; as we may see in this of *Ruth*, of *Ioseph* coming to be a Prince in Egypt: the like may be seen in *Moses*,

yea in the glorious aduancement of Christs Gospel. By all which Gods power and wisdom is shewed, mans wisdom cast downe, & our selues encouraged to haue faith and confidence in God.

And Ruth the Moabiteſe ſaid vnto Naomi.] When *Ruth* was come into Iudah; ſhee and *Naomi* dwelt together, but yet in poore eſtate, and now time ſeruing to helpe themſelues by labour, *Ruth* bethinketh her ſelfe what to do in this caſe; ſhee murmureth not againſt the God of Iſrael, as his owne people the Iſraelites did in the wilderneſſe, and were ready to returne into Egypt; ſhee minded not Moab; ſhee was not offended with *Naomi* her pouertie, nor with the reſt for not affording her plenty; but ſhee reſolueth to uſe her owne labour for her helpe, while the time did ſerue. From which we may learne, That *honest hearts truly intertaining Religion, doe not forſake it or the godly for worldly wants.* *Ruth* could not for theſe things be made to ſtart backe; nor Saint *Paul* for all his afflictions; for ſincere hearts loue Religion for it ſelfe, and the godly for their vertues, not for their outward eſtate; they alſo doe know a reward of eternall happineſſe to be in the life to come, which they ſet before them, and therefore do not take offence from the outward things of this life, which they leaſt eſteeme of, and looke to haue the leaſt ſhare in them; which reſproueth thoſe that for the wants of the world bid farewell to the Word, like *Demas*: but the Apoſtles for Chriſt forſooke all; and *Moses* choſe the poore eſtate of the godly to liue religiously, before

before the Court of *Pharaoh* to liue viciously. Let this checke also those which vpon euery want murmur against God, and are ready with the rebellious company in the *Wildernesse*, to returne into Egyptian bondage of sinne & *Satan*, for to inioy some outward & worldly contentment.

Let me now goe to the field.] Though it was honest, good, and necessary which *Ruth* intended, yet would shee not goe abroad without her mother in lawes leaue and good liking: For godly children hold themselves bound to be at the disposing of their parents, yea in all lawfull and necessary things, though their parents also be poore; because such children make conscience of the Commandement of honouring their parents. Let children follow this example: *Ruth* was but a daughter in law, yet see her grace and humility, which the Lord rewarded vnto her. Which iustly condemneth the sawcinesse of children in law in these dayes, who thinke no duety to be due to father or mother in law, especially if they be poore, as was *Naomi* here. But what speake I of children in law? I wish that a iust complaint might not be taken vp against such as by nature owe themselves vnto their parents. Are there not *Dinah*-like daughters, which will follow their delights till they returne home with shame? Doe not many marry as their lust doth leade, without any respect to their parents, like the wanton sonnes before the flood? I wish the seed of *Esaus* were not among vs, which vex their parents. Children will seeke to be nourished

Gen. 6.

Deut. 37. 16.
Pro. 30. 17.

of their parents when they are yong, or when they be in need: But if parents haue need of them, Ah how vnnaturall be they! Will they like a *Ruth* willingly labour for them? Or will they not rather despise them, and get from them, and labour for others? A strange Masters commandement shall be obeyed, when a word from poore parents will make stubbornne children the more disobedient: But let children know and remember the Law against a stubbornne sonne, Deut. 21. 18. and the curse which is threatned against such as despise their parents, that they may feare and tremble, and doe no more so wickedly.

And gleane eares of corne after him.] Ruth asketh not leaue to runne abroad to see others, or to be seene, to see the countrey, to get acquaintance, to goe to Wakes, Reuels, May-games, Morris-dauncings, and such heathenish vanities practised too commonly heere, but not knowne among the ancient people of God. No, no, *Ruth* desireth to goe to labour for her liuing, and to helpe also her poore old mother in law, yea shee was not ashamed to goe to gleane; though shee had beene the wife of one so well descended, shee scorneth not honest labour: For *honest minds will stoupe to base meanes* (in proud persons conceits) *so they be honest to relieue their wants in their poore estate.* *Moses* will not stand vpon his education, the gifts of his mind, and singular learning in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, but will be content to keepe *Israhels* sheep in his need; so will *Paul* worke with his hands, and make tents to maintaine himselfe, though

though he was brought vp as a Scholler vnder learned *Gamaliel*. The humilitie of these is to be followed, as praise-worthy for their vertue and pietie herein. It is no shame to labour when men are brought low, whatsoeuer they be by birth, as they call it, and by their first education: The godly neuer stood vpon these tearmes, as many now doe, who brag of their Gentry, and yet are not ashamed to goe a begging, or hang vpon their richer kindred, till they be weary of them, or will runne into dishonest courses, and all this forsooth because they hold labour a disgrace; worke they cannot, they will not; but it is no shame for them to liue dishonestly, and idly, contrary to nature, contrary to Gods iniunction, that men should labour, contrary to the practice of all the godly, and the example of Christ himselfe, who wrought in a handie-craft, as may be gathered by the words out of the Euangelist, and in that it was said, *He went home & was obedient vnto his parents*. Note further how *the truly-religious will not liue idly*. This we may see in *Ruth* here, & in *Iacob*, and others; for they make conscience of the losse of time. Let him or they whosoever, which thinke themselves religious indeed, make conscience to take paines in some calling, and beware of liuing idly. What if they can say, they haue outward meanes enough for themselves to liue vpon? Yet they are not to liue idly, because idlenesse is a great sinne, the nurse of all vice, as we see in those that liue idly, they are made the deuils instruments to all villanie; neither is it

Mark. 6.

Ephe. 4. 28.

Leuit. 19. 9.

and 23. 22.

Deut. 24. 19.

Leuit. 19. 9.

Deut. 23.

24. 25.

enough that a man can maintaine himselfe, & be chargeable to none, but he must liue to doe good to others, as the Apostle teacheth.

Lastly, obserue that *gleaning*, as now, so then, was a lawfull meanes for the poore to get corne for food; as we may read in the Bookes of *Moses*. And thus the Lord shewed his care for the poore, and also taught the rich in the midst of Gods mercy, and bounty toward them, to be mindfull of the needie brethren, and not to forget them. The rich therefore must giue the poore leaue to glean; they may not driue them out of the field, neither may they glean vp their lands themselues, and so rob the poore of their due, which is the scattering of Gods mercy towards them. And here let the poore honestly take this libertie to glean, but first let them aske leaue of the owner, as *Ruth* did, verse 7. then also to acknowledge it a fauour, as shee did. Thirdly, to gather the scattered eares, and not to cut off the eares of standing corne, nor to steale whole sheaues, or out of shokes, as many theeuish people doe, to the hurt of their owne soules, and the hardening of mens hearts against themselues, and other poore people more honest then they.

In whose sight I shall find fauour.] So she went, but as vnacquainted: Shee had libertie to glean by Law; yet shee speaketh as one that would glean with leaue, and as shee that had hope to find fauour somewhere, though shee knew not of whom to expect it in particular. Thus shee goeth, as we say, at random, or at aduenture, but God,

as

as he had decreed, so he directed her by the hand of his providence, whither shee should goe.

One thing note here, that *the godly, in vsing lawfull meanes to line, hope to find fauour with one or other for their reliefe;* this *Ruths* words here doe shew as much. For they trust in God, who hath the hearts of men in his hand to encline them, as he pleaseth, as he did *Boaz* towards *Ruth*, & who also hath promised his helpe to those, which vsing lawfull meanes, do depend vpon him. And therefore in doing our part, and vsing the meanes, let vs in our wants hope well: let vs not doubt, but that he will blesse our labours.

Psal. 37. 3.

And shee said vnto her, Goe, my daughter.] See here how meekely and louingly this good old *Naomi* answereth: no doubt but it reioyced her heart, to see her so willing to take paines, whom shee, perhaps, would haue beene loth to haue pressed to such a meane businesse. We may note, that *requests are to be graunted of parents, vnto children, when they be lawfull and fit.* As *Iob* did to his children to feast together; *Dauid* to *Amnon* his request to haue *Tamar* sent to dresse meate for him, though yet villanie was in *Ammons* heart; but the request was reisonable, and therefore yeelded vnto of *Dauid*: so was *Absaloms* desiring to goe to *Hebron* (as he pretended) to pay his vow, which he had made vnto God. *Caleb* also graunted his daughter her request; and *Naomi Ruths* here; which is to be followed of louing parents; but yet withall with deliberate consideration of the reasons, vpon which the request is made; lest a *Dauid* be

2. Sam. 13.

Ios. 15. 19.

be deluded, and wickednesse be committed, by an outrageous *Ammon*. Another thing may bee obserued, which is this, that *a meeke and louing spirit giueth a meeke and a louing answer*. *Naomi* saith not, *Goe*, as a sturdy speech; but, *Goe*, my Daughter, for shee was not of a sturdy, proud and impatient spirit, of which a rough and churlish speech is a signe. And therefore let vs learne to answer meekely and louingly, that we may not be iustly censured for churlish natures, proud and impatient: good speech is very gracefull to others, and procureth loue to our selues, as the contrary doth prouoke vnto wrath, as we see *Nabals* answer did vnto *Dauid*.

Verse 3. *And shee went, and came and gleaned in the field after the Reapers; and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.*

AS *Ruth* craued leaue and obtained it, so she now goeth abroad, and by Gods good prouidence lighteth on the field of *Boaz*. So as here is shewed what shee did abroad; shee gleaned: then how; after the Reapers: where it was; in *Boaz* field, who is here againe said to bee *Elimelechs* kinsman, that so the prouidence of God might herein more clearly appeare.

And shee went, and came and gleaned in the field.] Shee craued leaue to goe, and when it was graunted her, shee accordingly went. *Honest motions and intendments to well-doing are to bee put into practice:*

practice : else they bee nothing worth. *Paul* had a mind to visite the brethren, and so hee did; the prodigall sonne had a purpose to returne home, and hee returned; *Moses* thought of going out to visit his brethren, and so he did. If motions be good, it is good to put them in execution, and that speedily, if cause so require, as *Ruth* doth here; and not to mind, purpose, and will to doe well, and yet neuer to doe as they so purpose, losing the fruit of good thoughts. Again, note from this, her bold aduventure, and going forth in such perillous times, that *whom necessity moueth and confidence in God encourageth, they doe feare no danger.* *Ruth* went abroad among strangers; shee was a stranger and a young woman, yet trusting in God, and being vrged of necessity to vse honest meanes to liue, shee feared no perill, though in those dayes euery one did what they listed, because there was then no King in Israel. Of such an vndaunted spirit was *Ehud*, in setting vpon *Eglon*; *Gideon*, in destroying *Baals* altar; *Elijah*, in seeing the face of *Achab*; and *Michaiab*, in telling the truth before 2. Kings, cōtrary to the word of 400. false prophets. For when men haue faith in God, when the duty of their calling warranteth them, they grow couragious and bold, and doe put on a resolution without feare. Therefore in our affaires, to remoue feare, let vs haue an honest calling to that which wee goe about, and haue confidence in God, who is able and will stand by to helpe vs.

After the Reapers.] Shee followed such as cut
vp

A.G. 14.

Exo. 1.

Iudg. 18.

vp the standing corne; she thrust not her selfe in before, or among them, as an impudent bold housewife; but followed after the, to gather vp the scattered eares, which they did leaue, and neither this did shee, neither without leaue, see verse 7. all making to the commendation of the honesty, modestie, humility, and good behauiour of this vertuous young woman, that her example might be for others to imitate.

And her hap was.] That is, though shee went at vnawares, making choise of no place, but where shee should find fauour, yet shee light well, by Gods good providence; which is here to be vnderstood in her good hap: which word is spoken according to men; when things fall out besides a mans purpose, or otherwise than was intended, and whereof a man is ignorant, before the thing come to passe, then it is counted hap, or lucke, or as the Heathen vsed to speake, fortune. *It is not unlawfull to speake according to men thus, It happened, It chanced, It was my luck,* so it be we vnderstand thereby, that which happeneth beyond our purpose and expectation, but yet guided by Gods hand and providence, and also that wee know and hold no meere chance, and fortune, as the Heathen haue imagined, without the hand of God acknowledged therein, as the idolatrous priests, and diuiners of the Philistims once spoke; if wee vnderstanding our selues in this wise, there is no scruple to be made of speaking, as aforesaid; alwaies excepting in cleare case, where the apparent hand of God is seene: for

Deut. 19. 4.

Luk. 10. 31.

Mat. 10. 29, 30.
Act. 27. 34.

1. Sam. 6. 9.

for thus offended the Philistines.

To light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz. God doth so governe mens actions, as things fall out beyond expectatiō as they were to be wished. See it in the successe of *Abrahams* seruāt, sent to fetch a wife for *Isaac*: in *Eliab* his comming to the poore widdow of *Sarepta* in a most fit houre; and in *Sauls* comming into the Cave where *David* and his men were; by which, *David* tooke occasiō to cleare his innocency to *Saul*, which otherwise could neuer haue beene so well demonstrated. And this God doth, as foreknowing, and determining euery thing, and ruling the same by the hand of his prouidence, as himselfe hath determined to bring things to passe. This should make vs to rely vpon Gods prouidence, as *Abraham* did in that thing, vvhich vvas to his seruāt vncertaine, and also to acknowledge his prouidence in euery thing, in a vvorke of mercy to be thankesfull, and in any other triall to learne patience. Note againe hence, that God will prosperously direct the well minded, which will vse honest meanes to relieue themselves. So hath he promised, *Psal.* 37. 3. for their vway is vvell pleasing to God, in such a course and case. Let vs therefore depend on God, and vse honest meanes to sustaine our vvants: so shall vve assuredly haue experience of Gods goodnesse towards vs.

Who was of the kindred of Elimelech. These vvords are againe mentioned, to shew that it vvas the same *Boaz*, mentioned before, and also to shew why *Ruth* had so quickly obtained leaue

to

Gen. 24.

Gen. 24. 7.

to glean there, and why *Boaz* did so much respect her afterwards, and that of a suddaine, vpon so small acquaintance, and to giue vs to know, what a way hereby was made to further the Lords intendment in matching *Boaz* with this *Ruth*, *Elimelechs* daughter in law, and the wife once of *Mablon*, one of his sonnes, which being dead, the next kinsman was to raise vp the name of the dead, and to take the widdow for his wife; so that *Elimelech* might not want one for his inheritance amongst Gods people.

Verse. 4. And behold, *Boaz* came from *Bethlehem*, and said vnto the Reapers, The Lord bee with you. And they answered him, The Lord blesse thee.

GOD bringeth *Ruth* by his hand into *Boaz* field, and then he by the same hand draweth *Boaz* to come thither while shee was there, that so the one might be knowne to the other; that by seeing and liking, the match might bee made, which God in his mercy intended for his daughter, this young woman. Here in this verse is *Boaz* going into the field to his Reapers; then his saluting of them, and their re-saluting of him.

Chap. 4. 1.

And behold.] This is vsed to set out a remarkable thing, and is here, as if it had beene said, Take notice of Gods providence herein, as a thing worthy obseruation, that *Boaz* should now come into the field, at this time, vnto his Reapers, and
in

in willing the Reader to behold this, wee may learne, That *the provident hand of God is in all things to be diligently marked and obserued.* For hereby we shall see God in every thing, and so acknowledge his ruling hand in and ouer all; wee shall see his fauour and helpe in deliuering his children and seruants, as he did *Dauid* from *Saul*; in furthering them to their honour and welfare, as here *Ruth*; and so *Mordecai*, when the King must, in reading, light vpon that place in his *Chronicles*; which concerned him. Wee shall then hereby see his wrath against the wicked, in bringing *Iezabel* to *Iezreel*; with *Iehoram* and *Ahaziah*, to cut off at once the house of *Abab*, as he had threatned. Let vs then obserue wisely the hand of Gods prouidence, that he may haue the glory in all things, when we see his rule and power either in his workes of mercy, or workes of iudgement.

Boaz, came from *Bethlehem*, I vnto his Reapers, who were reaping in his field, and so like a good husband would haue an eye vnto them: for good householders do ouersee the affaires of their house & family, and such also as they set on worke. 2. King. 4. 8, 18. The *Shunamite* would bee with his Reapers, as *Boaz* was here. This is *Salomons* counsell, Pro. 27. 23. And the praise of a good housewife also is, to looke well to the waies of her household, because riches are vacertaine, Pro. 27. 24. they abide not for euer: and it is no lesse a vertue to keepe what we haue gotten, then to get what wee had not. Carefull vigilancy ouer our family is a good

1. Sam. 23. 16,
27.
Ester. 6.

2. King. 8. 29.
& 9. 15, 16.

Pro. 31. 27.
*Non minor est
virtus, quam
querere, paria
sueri.*

good means to preserve our estate; by this shal we see, who is faithfull and painfull, to commend and reward them, and who is negligent and faithlesse to reprove and correct them, or else to remove them. Let vs therefore learne to play the good husbands, as men say; for it is no fault for a man to be thriving, or for the greatest to looke well to their charge: if any fault be, it is in covetousnes, and niggardlinesse, and not in provident circumspection, & in a watchfull eye over the family, to keepe them in honest labour, and to prevent wastfulness. Negligent masters in this point are worthy reprove, they spoyle their servants, they vndoe themselves. And here such must know themselves to bee in an error, vwho thinke it a disgrace for mē of vworth, to see to their servants, and to be among their workemen. Indeepe, if servants were like vnto *Jacob*, faithfull and painfull, or like *Ioseph* to be trusted with all that men haue, or like the faithfull workemen in *Joash*, and *Iosias* daies; the eye of the master might be spared; but many servants be rather like false *Zibah*, filching *Oncimus*, before his conuersion; riotous, like those in Mat. 24. 49. or Run-avaies, like *Shemeis* servants, so that masters had neede to see to them: yet must masters bevvare of a greedy mind, as thinking that servants neuer doe enough: they must take heede of distrustfull mindes, without iust cause, charity thinketh no ill; neither must they keepe their servants to worke so hardly, as that they cannot afford them any time to serue God: for such masters are more like

Gen. 31, 38,
39, 40, and
39, 23.
2. King. 12. 15.
and 22. 7.

like Turkes than Christians, and vse their seruants rather like beasts, than like men, endued with reason, and hauing soules to saue. If Masters take time also for the soule, and for the seruice of God, & then be prouidēt for the world, it is praise-worthy, and the fruit thereof wil appeare in Gods blessing falling vpon the worke of their hands.

And said vnto the Reapers, The Lord bee with you.] Thus Boaz speaketh to them, when he cometh into the field; this was his manner of saluting them, and likewise of their resaluting him againe; so that the forme of saluting is not one and the same, as wee may see in Psal. 129.8. Mat. 26. 49. Iosh. 20.26. Now, salutations are not onely words of courteous and ciuill behauiour, but prayers made vnto God one for another; and therefore wee may hence learne,

I. That it is a commendable thing for one to salute another when they meete. This our God and Sauour did: this Angels haue done, and this we see good men haue done. It is among men ciuility and courtesie, especially of the superiour to the inferiour, as here: it also procureth loue; as wee may see in *Abshaloms* courteous saluting the people, by which hee stole away their hearts after him; but this was the abuse of this commendable practice: wee must beware of hypocrisie therein: we must not salute like *Iudas*; not like *Ioab*, with faire words, and foule hearts and hands; neither must any neglect this, of pride and contempt of others, as too many now doe. If this be cōmendable, then surely the Anabaptists do erre,

L

who

Iud. 6. 11.

Ioh. 20. 26.

Iud. 6. 12.

Luk. 1. 28.

Mat. 26. 49.

2. Sam. 20. 10.

who hold it vnlawfull to salute such as they meet, obeisting certaine places of Scripture, as 2. King. 4. 29. where the Prophet commandeth his seru-
uant not to salute, or resalute any that hee met. But this place is to be vnderstood, onely to ex-
presse the haste he should make, as the comman-
dement to gird vp his loynes, doth shew: It doth
not simply forbid to salute any, at all other occa-
sions, or times. Another place is in Luke 10. 4.
where our Sauour Christ forbiddeth his Apo-
stles to salute any man by the way. Neither is
here forbidden to salute any: for in verse 5. hee
teacheth them to salute others. But this speech
was, to shew that they should make speede in that
whereabout they were sent, and to auoid the
least hinderance that might stay them from per-
formance of their duty: for by saluting one ano-
ther, sometimes occasions are taken of staying,
which here he seemeth to haue relation vnto, and
not that hee would haue them neglect common,
and commendable courtesies. The third place is
2. Iohn verse 10. where hee forbids to bid God
speede to some: which is to be vnderstood, of not
allowing of such as were Heretickes and false
teachers, as farre forth as they were such, and
therein not to wish them prosperity, which is no-
thing to ordinary salutations.

I I. That *Masters are to pray that God may be
with their household, family, and workemen.* So
doth *Beaz* here pray; and there is good reason for
it: for if God be with them, they shall prosper, as
did *Iacob*, and *Ioseph* in their seruices, and *Abra-*
hams

hams seruant in his businesse. It is hee that giueth them strength to labour, and without his blessing nothing can goe forward: for hee giueth power to get wealth. And therefore let Masters remember this duty to God for their family and seruants.

Psalme. 127. 2.
Deut. 8. 18.

And they answered him, The Lord blesse thee.]

Thus they religiously salute him againe : So as *they which doe salute, are to be re-saluted.* The Scripture teacheth humanity, and commendeth the same to vs in godly mens practice; as here in saluting one another, so in comely gesture in reuerencing our betters, as *Abigail*, did *Dauid*, and *Ioseph Iacob*. Indeed the Scripture, besides other things is a schoole of good manners, and therefore checketh such as be vnciuill in their carriage and behauiour, when ciuility and good manners are a grace to a Christian profession. Againe note, that *seruants are to pray for a blessing upon their Masters.* It is a rare grace to play the part of an *Abrahams* seruant. But thus to doe, argueth true loue in a Seruant: and if a Master be blessed, he is the better inabled to doe for a good seruant. But where are such seruants now to bee found?

Gen. 48. 12.

Gen. 24.

Verse 5. *Then said Boaz vnto his seruant, that was set ouer the Reapers, Whose Damosell is this ?*

THIS is an enquiry after the young woman. Wherein is to be obserued, who maketh the demand, of whom hee enquireth, and concerning

ning whom the demand was made.

Then said Boaz.] Hee no sooner came into the field, and had saluted his Reapers, but his eye was vpon *Ruth*, of her hee tooke speciall notice, and demanded who shee was, and to whom shee did belong. Which sheweth a guiding power of God herein, and also that afore this time hee had not seene her. Old *Naomi* had not sent her, it may seeme, to his house, nor abroad to bee gazed vpon, and yet was she famous for her vertues, Chap. 3. 11. which will spread themselves abroad well enough, though the party in person be knowne to few.

Vnto his seruant that was set ouer the reapers.] Boaz had placed one as Ouerseer to the rest, & of this man doth he demand the question. Hence note, That it is a point of wisdom in great families, to appoint an Ouerseer ouer the rest in the Masters absence. Thus *Abraham* had *Eleazar* his Steward; so had *Ahab* his *Obadiab*; and here *Boaz* the Bailiffe of his husbandrie: for Masters cannot alway be with their seruants, and therefore it is necessary to haue such a one, to set euery one to their taske, to see what is done, to be done with diligence, and also well and orderly, and to preuent falsehood and deceit, as well as they can, and further to acquaint their Master with his affaires, with the paines and labour of such as be diligent, & contrarily to giue notice of such as be not for his seruice, that so the one sort may be rewarded as they deserue, and the other put off, after their wages be paid them; for the hyre must not be kept backe, which a good Steward

Steward must haue care of for his Masters credit, and his owne discharge. But yet here let masters in setting one ouer the rest, make a good choise, and see that the man be, First, wise and skilfull in that he vndertaketh. Secondly, one diligent and painefull in his owne person. Thirdly, a man fearing God, as was *Abrahams* seruant and *Abahs* Steward: For such a one will be honest towards his Master, carefull to make others religious, and so procure a blessing to the whole house. Such an one may be trusted, as *Potiphar* did *Ioseph*; and to such an one authoritie may be committed to command others, and to order matters among seruants: but yet euer so, as that he be ready to giue an account of his stewardship. Now also hence we may inferre, that if one may be set ouer another in a familie, then also in a Cōmon-wealth; for without order of superiority and inferiority, no Common-wealth can stand; which being true, ouerthroweth the Anabaptistick Anarchie. Moreouer, in that the Ouerseer is asked concerning this damosell by *Boaz*, and not the rest, we learne, That *seruants, who are betrusted with the care and charge of businesse, are to giue account touching any thing or person within their charge: to them the question is to be made, which will make such to looke to their charge, to be ready to answer according to the trust committed into their hands.*

Whose damosell is this?] This sheweth that *Ruth* was yet but yong, and therefore the more commendation to her, that came to be so famous for

vertue: And in that *Boaz* asketh not what, but whose damosel shee is; it giueth vs to know, that he thought her to belong to some, as one of the maids of Israel, and that shee was not (as now vaine yong women desire to be) at their owne hand, which is the next way to lewdnesse and all loosnesse. Such Mistrislesse maids were not then, as now too common, which maketh them also to become common. An euill not sufferable in a well gouerned state, to haue Masterlesse men or Mistrislesse women. It is fit to aske young people till they be married, Whose they be? to whom they belong: and whom they doe serue? Before I conclude this verse, another thing may be noted frō *Boaz*: That it is a wise part of a householder, to know who they be which come to his house, or into his grounds or field, to take commoditie by him: as he doth here, finding her in his field with his reapers; lest a man giue countenance to the vnworthie: for men are to be mercifull, but yet in wisdom, because some are not to be relieued: Therefore let men well know to whom to giue. In former times amongst vs, men haue bene commended for good housekeepers: but if their housekeeping were examined by Gods Word, we should find it nothing lesse then good housekeeping, but rather such houses were houses of riot, excesse, prodigality, gluttony, and drunkennes, suffering all sorts of idle lewd, and licencious Mares to come in to eate, drinke, card, dice, ryot, and reuell vnder a Lord of misrule, especially at Christmasse; a time pretended to be spent in ioy and reioycing in the honor

2. Theſ. 3.

honor of Christ, but was indeed abused to his great dishonour, to the increase of sinne, and the pleasing of Satan.

Verse 6. *And the servant that was set over the Reapers, answered & said, It is the Moabitesse damosell that came backe with Naomi out of the countrey of Moab.*

THe servants answer vnto his Master briefly and fully. In which he here and in the next verse prayseth *Ruth* also. He telleth here what shee was, whence shee came, and with whom, and so sheweth whose shee was, and to whom shee did belong.

And the servant that was set over the Reapers, answered and said.] By this servants ready answer vnto his Masters demand, it appeareth that he had made enquirie of her what she was. *Faithfull servants which haue charge committed to them, should be able to answer to their Lord or Master, concerning any person or thing which fall within their charge, when the question is asked.* This doth argue the care and diligent circumspection which is to be vsed of all such as be put in trust, and it will commend their faithfulness and honestie: and the contrary sheweth faithlesse and dishonestie.

It is the Moabitesse damosell that came backe with Naomi out of the countrey of Moab.] This servant very briefly telleth to the full what shee was; and here it is not a bare declaration, but also a commendation of her, who being but a yong woman, would come with an olde poore woman from

her owne countrey, into a strange land; which indeed was a great praise to her, as I haue afore noted: and if the seruant spoke this, as some Learned thinke, in the way of commendation, wee may learne,

I. That *as the Master was a Lover of vertue, so was the man: so like happy Master, like happy man.* For as this praised her to the Master, as it better appeareth in the next verse; so the Master greatly commendeth her, after he tooke notice of her; by which the loue of goodnesse in them both appeareth. Which may set out their happinesse: and on the contrary it is unhappinesse to an *Obadiab* to dwell with a wicked *Ahab*; or a *Iacob* with a *Laban*; so to an *Hezekiah* to haue his *Shebnah*; or an honest *Mephibosheth*, his wicked *Zibah*.

II. We may see, That *the godly and well-disposed will praise vertue in whomsoever they see it*, whether in strangers or home-borne, in poore or rich, noble or base persons, friend or foe, as *Dauid* did in both *Saul* and *Abner*: because honest and vertuous minds loue vertue truely in euery one; they are not transported with an ill-disposed heart, either through pride or enuie, to disdain, or maligne graces in other, but to speake the truth, and to praise them for whatsoeuer is good in them. This marke of true loue let vs shew forth: this will preferue goodnesse and vertue in others, procure respect to our selues, and good fauour to such of them as be poore, as we may see here from *Boaz* towards *Ruth*. This condemneth such First, as cannot praise other for well-doing: which argueth

gueth pride, or enuie, or malice, or all of the, and by which they shew too much selfe-loue in themselves, and little loue or none at all to their neighbour. Secondly, those which are so farre from praising men, as they lessen their vertues, and blazon their infirmities, and so seeke to disgrace them, contrary to true loue and charitie; and yet a common euill in these dayes in most. Thirdly, those that will commend perhaps others, but not before better then themselves, not to the full, but with their Ifs & Ands, with words of exceptions, shewing plainly they be loth to giue men their due, falsely supposing, the praises of other should derogate from themselves, and from their owne worth; so vainely ieaious are we of our owne reputation.

III. We may obserue, that in praises, Religion is to haue the first place: for here is *Ruth* set out, as one forsaking her heathenish acquaintance, to keepe company with a vertuous woman, and leauing her idolatrous countrey, for to dwell in Iudah amongst Gods people; and thus is *Iob* set forth & *Cornelius*: For Religion & Vertue is that which is in man most excellēt, making him more then a man, for as much as he becomes a spirituall man of a carnall. Therefore here let our commendations begin, and not dispraise men for profession of Religion: an argument of the want of Religion: nor iudge them worthy commendations, which are altogether without Religion. True it is, that many may haue such gifts of nature and art, as may much set them out with men: but if they

Iob 1.
Act. 10. 2.

they want Religion and vertue, their praise is more heathenish then Christian: and therefore they haue no cause to reioyce in abilities of nature or art, seeing Satan the enemy of al mankind, may therein be preferred before them: and in nothing can man be said to be more excellent or happy then a very Deuill, except in the right vse of true Religion: in nothing else can he goe beyond him, nay, in no other thing can he equall him. Let therefore true Religion and vndefiled before God the Father, which is, to visit the fatherlesse and widdowes in their aduersity, and to keepe our selues vnspotted of the world, be our chiefeft praise.

Verse 7. And shee said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the Reapers, amongst the sheaues: so she came, and hath continued euen from the morning, untill now, that shee tarried a little in the house.

THe Bayliffe proceedeth still on in the commendations of *Ruth*, from her humility and modestie in not presuming without leaue: and then, from her diligence and constancy in her labour and paines-taking.

And shee said, I pray you, let me glean, and gather after the Reapers, amongst the sheaues.] That is, the cares of corne which lie scattered by the sheaues, which yet lay abroad; and not that she did desire to be meddling with the sheaues. This she desired, and *Boaz* alloweth, verse 15. which seemeth therefore to be a special fauor to her. It was lawfull
for

Deut. 24. 19.

for strangers, fatherlesse, & widdowes, to glean, by Gods allowance & commandement vnto his people; yet she entereth not boldly vpon that libertie, but asketh leaue humbly and modestly. Whence we may learne, That *although God do bid the rich to relieue the poore, and to giue leaue in this case for them to gather scattered eares, yet is the same to bee obtained by leaue, and the good will of the Owners:* as Ruth here hath leaue. For though the rich be commanded to giue by Gods Precept, yet before men they haue right to all they haue, and it is at their libertie to dispose thereof in that respect, and they may make choise of their poore, as they see them to need, and to be worthy of reliefe: and therefore albeit a man be poore, he may not (because God commands the rich to relieue him) be his owne Caruer; he may not take from the rich any thing, but as it shall be bestowed vpon him. Let the poore learne humility and modesty; and not be insolently bold and vnthankful, or false and deceitfull, as many be, who make no conscience to filch and steale, and thinke their pouerty a reason sufficient to excuse them, especially if it be but in trifling things as they account them, as is the picking now and then eares out of sheaues, or (shockes of corne; or breaking hedges for firewood; or robbing of Orchards; or the like. But let them kuow that pouertie excuseth not their sinne; it is theft in them, and the Theefe is cursed; and theefes shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Zach. 5.
1. Cor. 6.

So shee came, and hath continued, euen from the morning

morning untill now.] After leaue, shee set her selfe to worke, but before, as it may seeme, shee went home againe & stayed a little; so as her first coming was, but to know where to get leaue, and then forthwith after, to fall to her labour, yet shee made nor her mother acquainted with any thing till night, as appeareth by verse 19. The chiefe point commended here to vs, is, That *painefulnesse in our labour with constancie, is praiseworthy*: so is it here in *Ruth*, as it was in *Jacob*, and blessed in them both: for this is commanded, Eccles. 9. 10. and the contrary forbidden, Rom. 12. Let vs then be diligent in our labour, and be constantly painfull: So shall God be obeyed, Eccles. 9. 10. Prou. 27. 23. who hath promised to blesse such, Pro. 28. 19. and 20. 13. So it is gainfull, to the body healthfull, it doth procure fauour, Prou. 11. 27. and honour, Pro. 12. 24. and maketh rich, Prou. 10. 4. with Gods blessing, Prou. 10. 22. Beware then of sloth, which is forbidden, Rom. 12. it bringeth men to follow vaine company, Prou. 28. 19. gaming, Prou. 21. 17. as experience sheweth, and so hasteneth pouertie, Prou. 10. 4. as being the punishment thereof: for God threatneth such with scarcity, Prou. 19. 15. and 12. 24. and 6. 6. and we see that such become wastfull, Prou. 18. 9. and their house decaie, Eccles. 10. 18. There be which labour, but not cherefully, nor constantly; and therefore these may here learne to amend, by the example of this *Ruth*, and the good housewife in the Prouerbs, which putteth her hands willingly to worke: for it is a hatefull thing to be sloth-

lothfull in our businesse, and forbidden, as before is shewed: In this the seruant, or day-tale-man may rob their Master; they are brethren to great waiters, saith *Salomon*, and are a consumption to the estate of such as keepe them: yet such make no conscience of this deceitfull working, though perhaps they haue a good measure of knowledge, and would be held more conscionable then some others be. But here it will be asked, perhaps, Who may be called slothfull? *Salomon* will tell the that such be slothfull, First, which refuse to worke, Pro. 21. 25, 26. Secondly, which make idle excuses to keepe them from dayly labour, Prou. 22. 13. and 26. 13. Thirdly, which be subiect to much sleep: for sloth causeth sleep, Prou. 19. 15. Fourthly, which loue their beds too well, Prou. 26. 14. and 24. 33. Fifthly, which suffer their ground to lie vnhusbanded, and their house to decay, Pro. 24. 30, 31. Eccles. 10. 18. Sixtly, which for a little cold will neglect their profit, and doing of their duety, Prou. 19. 4. Seuently and lastly, which goe lazily, as if they went vpon thornes, and loth to hurt themselues, Prou. 15. 19. These be *Salomons* markes of the slothfull.

Sauē that shee tarried a little while in the house.] Thus this seruant is carefull to speake the truth in his relation to a small circumstance of time, that he might not be disproued. *Honest minds and louers of the truth, are carefull to speake truly euery way, in euery circumstance, that they may not be taxed in the least degree of vntruth.* For he hath an high esteeme of the truth, whereupon he weigheth.

Prou. 10. 26.

Prou. 28. 9.

Nchem. 4. 23.

Ephes. 4. 25.

Rom. 3. 4.

Matth. 22. 16.

Ioh. 14. 17.

Ioh. 8. 44.

Osea 4. 2.

Reu. 21. 8.

Iob 13. 7, 10.

weigheth his words, and is carefull in speaking onely the truth. Oh that this care were in euery one now a dayes, as it should be! We are commanded to speake truth, and not to lie one to another; and God, whom we worship, is the God of truth: Christ is truth, and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth, leading into all truth: the Gospel, by which we beleue, is the Word of truth: and lastly, it is a marke of one that shall dwell in Gods Tabernacle, and rest on his holy Hill, to speake the truth, and that from his heart too. If we haue such motiues to presse vs to this duety, then first, iustly are they reprobable, which doe make no conscience of speaking truth; but are notorious lyers: such be of the Deuill, they liue in one of those sinnes, which made the Lord to haue a controuersie with the Inhabitants of the land in the dayes of *Osea*, and the lyer shall be cast into euerlasting destruction. There are such as seeme to make conscience of common lying, but yet will slip in the tongue now and then, as, First, to flatter others: so did the foure hundred false prophets lye to *Ahab*; so did *Doeg* to *Saul*. Secondly, they that utter an vntruth to doe another a pleasure, which is called an officious lye, as the Midwives in Egypt did, and *Michol* when shee preserued *David*: but we may not doe euill, that good may come thereof: we may not lye for God himselfe. Thirdly, they that by lying make others merry. In all the Scripture I find not an example hereof. It may be, though many then were wicked, yet it seemeth, not one was so lewd, as

to abuse his tongue with lying, to make others sport; it is wickednesse to make a sport of sinne. Fourthly, they that lye for gaine now and then, like *Gebezi*; or as *Ananias* and *Saphira*, whom the Lord fearefully punished: and yet it is too common for men now to lye for gaine, it is almost a marke of a tradesman. Fifthly, such as lye of ill-will, maliciously, and of enuie, as *Haman* against the Jewes; Scribes and Pharises against Christ; and *Potiphars* wife against *Ioseph*. Hence arise slander and backebiting, which Christians must carefully auoid; and not onely the hatefull kinds of lying, but the other also, and euery vntrue speaking in any degree; and to doe this, Speake euer with vnderstanding, deliberately, without hasty passion, without by-respects, also auoid leuity, and beware of too many words.

Verse 8. *Then said Boaz vnto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Goe not to glean in another field, neither goe from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens.*

BOAZ hauing heard of his seruant who she was, and then also taking notice of her, from that which he also before had heard of her, as it appeareth in verse 11. he now turneth his speech vnto her. Where note, who, to whom, how he speaketh, and what; euen words of loue and kindnesse, forbidding her to goe any whither else, but to abide by his maidens.

Then said Boaz vnto Ruth.] This noble rich man

man sheweth great kindnesse vnto the poore woman and stranger: when he knew what shee was, he vouchsafed to speake to her, and to comfort her in her poore estate. *The rich and the mightie are to shew themselves respectiue to the poore, which be godly, though strangers, when they be rightly informed of them,* as Boaz sheweth himselfe to Ruth here. It is a signe that they are godly, which loue godlinesse in others, especially the poore, themselves being rich. It greatly comforteth the afflicted spirit, and listeth vp the heart of such poore, and doth in some sort strengthen them in their well-doing. Those rich men doe not well then, who doe in their high esteeme of themselves despise the poore, and hold them very dissemblers in their profession; supposing without charity, that the poore cannot be religious, when yet of the poore, for the most part, God chuseth his people.

Iam. 2.

Ios. 7.

2. Sam. 18. 32.

Hearst thou not, my daughter?] Thus louingly he speaketh vnto her. And wee find in Scripture, that two sorts of persons thus spoke vnto others: the elder vnto the yonger, as *Eli* to *Samuel*; *Boaz* here to *Ruth*; and men of authoritie to inferiours. So spake *Iosua* vnto *Achan*; and *Ioa*b vnto *Abimaaz*. From this courteous speech of *Boaz* both as an old man, and also indeed as a man of authoritie, as appeareth in verse 1. and Chap. 4. 1. we learne,

I. That *an humble and mercifull man speaketh kindly where he wisheth well*, as also *Ioseph* did to his brethren; *Ionathan* to *Dauid* in distresse; and

and *Iob* to the poore. Humility is not high-minded, and mercy is compassionate, loue cannot bee rough-hewed, and therefore such as haue these graces, will be courteous, and cannot but vse good tearmes, especially to the poore and needie. Which condemneth those as void of humility, mercy, and loue, which are like churlish *Nabals*, and not like blessed *Boaz* vnto the hopefull and painefull poore.

II. That the ancient in yeeres, and men in authority, are to behaue themselves as Fathers vnto others; for so are they called, *1. Sam. 3. 6. Ios. 7. 19. 1. Sam. 24. 11. 2. King. 5. 12.* and this must be in instruction, and good example; and the Magistrate in correcting, not with rigour, but as a father with mercy and compassion punishing the sinne, but louing the person, as a father doth. It is a foule fault for the gray-headed to be more child-like, then father-like: and for a Magistrate to shew rather crueltie, then compassion. It were good for such to remember, That they are as Fathers, That the world is vnsable, That their turne may come to stand in need of mercy; and they should think that God made the one as well as the other. This made *Iob* to carry himselfe gently and humbly towards his inferiours. And here, let such as be in authoritie, be reuerenced and loued as fathers, and beware that the ancient in yeeres be not despised; but rather doe them honour, *Leuit. 19. 32.* for old age is a Crowne of glory, when it is found in the way of righteousness. Let the children deuoured, which mocked the old

M

Prophet

*Iob 31. 18.**Iob 31. 15.**Prou. 16. 31.*

Prophet *Elisha*, be a warning to all such to take heed, and remember *Corah* his rebellion against authority, and how the Lord punished it.

Goe not to glean in another field, neither goe from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens.] In haruest all worke that can; men and women are here sent into the field, & continued working: It is the time of reaping and carrying in Gods blessings giuen, and therefore may none be idle. To come to the matter betweene *Boaz* and *Ruth*, we see how before he in a louing tearme spake to her; here he expresseth his loue in deeds, both in these, and the words following in the next verse. Note, That the goodnesse of a mercifull good man stands not onely in louing tearmes, nor in faire words, without good deeds: both words and deeds are necessary to comfort the afflicted; with both which *Boaz* declareth his loue to *Ruth*: he alloweth her to glean amongst the sheaues; he warneth her not to goe any whither else; he willeth her to keepe with his maidens, and to follow his Reapers, to eate victuals with them. Thus let men shew mercy in word and deed: we may not doe well, and speake vncomfortably, neither may we giue good words, and neglect good deeds, as some in Saint *Iames* time did, and too many now doe. Another thing may we hence note, That women are to keepe with women; this is *Boaz* aduice to her: and it is most fit for sexe, for safety, for preferuation of chastitie, and a note of woman-like modestie, from which such be farre, as delight rather in mens company: a note of wantonnesse, and of an

1. Ioh. 3. 18.

Iam. 2.

an vnchaste heart. Women must company with women; and yet some not with any of that sexe. *Ruth* must keepe with *Boaz* maidens, the seruants of a godly man. It is dangerous for a *Dinah* to goe to the daughters of the land; a chaste maiden to goe amongst wanton idolatrous women; or a vertuous woman amongst vicious wantons, and vnchaste persons. Therefore let her, which toucheth her honestie, walke wisely towards both; auoid altogether the one, & be wise to iudge of the other.

Verse 9. *Let thine eyes be on the field that they doe reape, and goe thou after them: Haue not I charged the yong men, that they should not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, goe vnto the vessels, and drinke of that which the yong men haue drawne.*

Boaz goeth on expressing his loue to *Ruth* more and more: and this is here shewed in three things. First, in willing her to follow the Reapers into euery field. Secondly, in his care for her safety, in charging them not to touch her. Thirdly, in allowing to drinke when shee was dry, of that which was drawne for them.

Let thine eyes be on the field that they doe reape, and goe thou after them. Boaz had, it seemeth hereby, a great haruest: for this implyeth, they were to passe from field to field, and he willeth her to goe after whither soeuer, & not to lose their company, as desirous to doe her good this way, and so to be beholden to him, as she should not need to go to any other place to gleane. See here how bountifull

Gen. 43. 34.
and 45. 17. 18.

a mercifull and louing man is: So is true loue in whom-
soeuer it is, 1. Cor. 13. 4. and Mercy is not miserly, as
appeareth in *Iob*, Chap. 31. and in *Cornelius*, A&.
10. 2. See this also in the Lords loue towards his
beloued, his Church, fetched from the loue of a
Louer to his beloued, *Ezech.* 16. 8, 10, 11, 12. Let
then our loue and kindnesse appeare by our
bounty and mercy, as *Ioseph* shewed to his bre-
thren and father; and *Pharaoh* did to them for
his loue to *Ioseph*. Loue where it is, cannot pos-
sibly be barren; they therefore which shew it not
in workes of loue and mercy, as need is, and their
abilitie will giue leaue, they are no true Louers
of their brethren. People are now most in say-
ing, nothing in doing; they are like the Ada-
mant, drawing all to them, and as the Lions den,
admitting in all, but suffering nothing to goe out.
It is rare to heare of a Macedonian-like bounty,
freely to giue beyond abilitie; or of any like a
poore widow, which gaue her two mites, all shee
had. If men would giue of their superfluities, it
were well. Oh that we loued as well the workes
of mercy, and our poore brethren, and the Mi-
nisterie, yea but halfe so well, as we doe dain-
ties for our bellies, braue clothes for our backs,
and titles to bring our persons into reuerence
with men! But thus much for this.

*Haue not I charged the yong men that they should
not touch thee?*] To touch, is any way to wrong
another, *Gen.* 26. 11. *Psal.* 105. 15. *Zach.* 1. 8. By
which kind of speaking vsed by the Lord, we are
taught, that the least wrong is not to be offered to any,

nor

not so much as to touch them, as by way of offering thereby iniurie. This care had *Boaz* for *Ruth*, who not only doth her good, but preuenteth euill from her, in laying his command vpon them not to touch her. And in speaking by an interrogation, it is not onely to assure her of the truth, but it implyeth his authoritie ouer them, so as they durst not offer her any wrong, but would quietly suffer her to bee amongst them. Whence note, I. *Young poore women and strangers euen then were subiect to abuse*; and young men too wantonly giuen towards such. This *Boaz* knew, and therefore gaue them this charge: For youth is vanitie, as *Salomon* speaketh, and lust is as a commanding law ouer their hearts, except they haue grace to restraints the same, and that must bee by ordering themselves according to Gods Word. Let youth take notice hereof. II. That *Boaz* had a command ouer his seruants, so as they stood in awe of his word; else what had this beene for *Ruths* safetie? Neither would he haue thus spoken, *Haue not I charged them?* but that hee knew his word to bee a law to them. And such authoritie should Masters haue ouer seruants, who should bee subiect to their Masters, and not stubborne & gain-saying, without care to shew obedience, as too many be. III. That *Boaz* taketh care of her safetie; for loue doth not onely good, but seeketh to preuent ill from such as they doe loue and intertaine. Such care was in *Lot* towards his Guests; and in the old man of *Gibeah* towards the *Leuite*: for this is

Psal. 119. 9.

Gen. 19.
Iud. 19. 16, 23.

Iob 29. 12, 17.

Psal. 82. 3, 4.

Pro. 31. 8, 9.

Prou. 34. 11.

Exod. 22.

Mal. 3. 5.

Heb. 13.

Prou. 6.

Mal. 3. 5.

a fruit of loue, and also of faithfulness, when any one hath taken another into his protection, and admitted among such as he hath authoritie ouer. This is an vse for Magistrates; they should care for the preservation of others by their authoritie, for therefore are they set in such a place: and if they haue not this care, it is their sinne; and as they must see to all, so especially to the Fatherlesse, Widowes, and Strangers, and poore Labourers; for wrong offered to these, greatly displeaseth God, which hee threatneth to reuenge. And this should teach Gouvernours of families, so to rule and order their families, as they suffer not one to wrong another; that their eyes bee vpon them so, as they should not dare to offend against honestie and chastitie, by sitting among, and dallying with yong women, by filthie and wanton songs, by any other allurements to sinne, which young women are to auoid, as they haue a care to preserue their chastitie; and young mens vanitie and wickednesse herein must be restrained by their Parents and Masters: yet are there some so farre from this, as they can take pleasure in the light behaiour and wanton speeches of seruants and others, especially in reaping their haruest, allowing them thus, as they account it, to be merrie with their tongues, to make their hands to worke the faster: but this is in comparison a light fault, (though also a foule sinne, Ephes. 5.) for some Masters are authors of vncleannes, and deflowre maidens themselves, like lustfull and foule adulterers;

terers ; but let such remember the wrath of God against them.

And when thou art athirst, goe vnto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men haue drawne.] Thirst will come vpon the painefull labourer, and it must be quenched: Boaz therefore had prouided for his seruants vessels for water, which the young men drew ; of this hee giueth Ruth leaue to drinke. It may seeme a very small kindnesse to vouchsafe her libertie to drinke of the water; but we must know that it was common drinke for the best, aswell as the worst: Saul drunke water; Sisera called for water; Abraham gaue a bottle to Hagar for Ishmael his sonne: and his seruant drank water at Rebeccaes hand. It was not easie neither to come by, in such an hot and high countrie, water was not euery where so plentifull, as appeareth by the strife of Abimelechs and Isaaks seruants; by Hagar's lamenting for want of water; by the Miracle wrought for Samson: for the countrie was hot, and the waters aboue the earth soone dried vp, the springs were hard to be found, and wells were very deepe; so as this was a very good fauour of Boaz to Ruth; and Ruth, we see in the next verse, tooke it to be a great kindnesse, and was very thankfull in all humilitie. By this we see, that a worke of mercy and loue may be shewed in a small matter, as in a cup of cold water sometime, which shal not lose the reward: for it is mercie to supply the want of others for an heartie compassion, how little soeuer the thing be. This may teach men to bee

M 4

thankfull

1. Sam. 26. 11.
Iudg. 4.
Gen. 21. 14.
and 24.

Gen. 26. 19, 20.
and 21.

Iudg 15.

Ioh. 4.

Mat. 10. 42.

thankfull for supply of their want, though the matter be but little, and not to thinke mercie and kindnesse to consist in great gifts, and good turnes to be done in things of weight onely.

Verse 10. Then she fell on her face, and bowed her selfe to the ground, and said vnto him, Why haue I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

Ruths thankfulness to Boaz set out by action and speech: the action was a most humble and lowly gesture; the speech was an acknowledgement of fauour with admiration, with a reason thereof, for that she was a woman of another nation.

Then she fell on her face, and bowed her selfe to the ground. Thus Ruth beginneth to shew her thankfulness in a most respectiue fashion; which commendeth to vs her good manners to so great a person. This manner of behauiour was much vsed in those Easterne parts; as we may see in *Iacob* to *Esau*; *Abraham* to the Hittites; *Dauid* to *Ionathan*; *Abigail* to *Dauid*; and the seruant to his Lord. The Scripture often noteth the ciuill gesture and comely behauiour of his Seruants, as worthy imitation, and as a iust reproofe to the rude and vnciuill. But yet here is a caueat first to them which vse such outward courtesies, that the same be done in humility of heart; that it be not a foolish affection, an apish imitation, or meere courtly complementing, being but all shadowes of

Gen. 33. 3. and
23. 7. 12.
1. Sam. 20. 41.
Matth. 18. 26.

of humility, and yet indeed nothing lesse, as appeareth in the liuely colours and publike Ensignes of pride in such persons, if they be obserued aright: Then next, that such as haue these reuerent gestures giuen them, doe consider whether they deserue them, for their place and person; if they doe not, receiue them not; if they doe, yet not to waxe proud in heart thereby.

It may bee, some will here make some questions; as first, Whether it be lawfull to giue honour thus vnto man, in such an adoring manner? This is answered before: for the holy Ghost recordeth it as commendable. Secondly, then what difference betweene this which is done to men, and that which is done to God Almighty? Surely, in respect of the outward act, no difference is there at all, but of the minde, which doth conceiue of God herein as God, and so this outward humiliation becommeth diuine adoration; and of man, but as man, worthy of reuerence and honour for his place, his age and gifts, and so the worship and reuerence done him, is onely ciuill. Thirdly, some perhaps will aske, Whether this may be giuen vnto wicked men? Yes without doubt, as we see *Iacobs* reuerence to profane *Esau*; *Dauids*, to wicked *Saul*; and *Abrahams* bowing of himselfe to the idolatrous Hittites: for men and their places are to be distinguished. True it is, that *Elisha* shewed little respect vnto *Iehoram*; and *Mordecai* would doe no reuerence to proud *Haman*: but these had (no doubt) some extraordinary warrant so to doe, and are not therefore for ordinary imitation;

tation; the reasons alleaged for *Mordecai* are knowne, and therefore I will not trouble here the Reader with them, because they bee but weake coniectures.

Why haue I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? This humble soule wondreth at his so great kindnesse, though it was but to haue leaue to gleane, and to drinke water out of the vessels: She thought it strange, that so great a personage should speake thus respectiuely to her that was but a stranger. From hence may we obserue, first, that the vertuous and thankfull persons take most kindly such fauours as bee shewed them, and doe wonder rather thereat, then make light thereof, though but in common and meane things, especially if the fauours bee done with cheerefulnesse, as this vertuous woman *Ruth* doth here; for such doe looke into themselues, and their vnworthinesse, thinking with themselues what might rather withdraw mens affections from them, than win them to them. They also looke vp to God, and doe behold him in the Giuer, she being as Gods hand offering his mercies to them. These things make them to bee very thankfull, and to expresse it fully. This example of thankfulness is to be imitated of euery one beholden vnto others, and iustly reproveth the vngratefull; of which there be these sorts, First, such as receiue fauours, & will not acknowledge them like the nine Lepers. Secondly, such as scornfully refuse kindnesse offered, as they that will not be

be beholden vnto others, because they thinke they can liue of themselues. Thirdly, which will not requite a good turne done them, but rather churlishly reproach the partie, as *Nabal* did *David*. Fourthly, which will not helpe in need such as put their very liues in their hands for them and for others; thus dealt the men of *Sucoth* with *Gideon*. Fifthly, which in prosperity forget their friends, and what pleasure was done them in their aduersity; as did *Pharaos* Cup-bearer. Sixthly, which recompence euill for good; as *Iosh* did to *Iehoiada* his sonne; *Hannun* to *Dauids* Messengers; or which loue a man lesse, because of his loue to them: and so the *Corinthians* to *Paul*; the more he loued them, the lesse was he beloued. All these are ingratefull. Now, ingratitude is a foule sinne, it is a stoppage to all fauours, and drieth vp the affection of mens hearts; and God punished it in *Iosh*, and reuenged it vpon the *Sechemites*: and therefore let vs not be guiltie of a sinne so hatefull to God and man. I I. We learne, that it is a great fauour and grace for a rich Inhabitant, to take knowledge of one poore & a stranger too. This *Ruth* in her words here confesseth and admireth. For indeed, nothing but goodnesse in a man maketh him kind to strangers, especially poore ones: it is not nature, nor worldly reason. And therefore when strangers find fauour where they come, let them acknowledge it a great kindnesse, and a mercy of God, and a worke of his grace. I I I. That a godly man, as *Boaz*, will be good vnto the godly poore, though a stranger. And so should wee; as the Apo-
stle

Gen. 40. 23.

Eccles. 9. 15.

2. Sam. 10. 4.

2. Cor. 12. 15.

2. Chro. 24. 25.
Iudge. 9. 16, 20,
56, 57.

Heb. 13. 2.

Col. 3. 11.

Gal. 3. 28.

He commendeth it to vs; and our Sauour in the Parable of the Samaritane: And we must consider, that we may come into strange places our selues, and need fauour; remembring moreouer this, that if such strangers be Christians, they be our brethren and sisters in Christ, for in him there is neither Iew nor Greeke, but we are all one. Which condemneth the ill disposition of such as cannot abide that strangers should come among them, and that not such as *Ruth*, of another nation, but such as be borne in the same kingdome, yea in the same countrey, if they feare any charge to come to them thereby. Oh how would they take on in our vncharitable dayes, if a poore *Naomi* should, after many yeeres, returne to the place of her former abode, and bring a poore woman with her, to charge the parish! Well, good *Boaz* did not so, neither the Inhabitants of Bethlehem.

IV. Note, how *shamefastnesse, wisdome and humilitie* are excellent ornaments of praise in a woman, as they are here in *Ruth*; shee cast downe her eyes, not looking impudently vpon him, shee bowed to the ground, and shewed humilitie, and her words were effectuell and few, and therein was her wisdome. These three, shamefast countenance, humble gesture, and fewnesse of words, doe grace a woman highly, and doe winne her honour, though neuer so poore. And therefore let women labour for them, more then for a faire face, gay clothes, and a great portion; these make them saleable with wantons and worldlings; but the other with the wise and vertuous. This re-
proueth

Esa. 3. 18.

1. Tim. 5. 13.

proueth such as be of a proud and hawtie carriage, which are costly Dames, commanding Mistresses, but hardly obedient wiues: such also as be great talkers, reprov'd by the Apostle: these be shrewd Dames, often they breed contention abroad, & some disquietnesse at home, for want of the governemēt of the tongue; such women as be bold without blushing, impudent Dames, which will not couer their faces with *Rebecca* for modestie sake, but will goe naked so farre as modestie cryeth shame ypon. But they which haue to sell, thinke they may be allowed to set open their shop-windowes. But chaste mindes seeing the deformity thereof, will frame themselues to a more decent and modest behauiour: such as would hold the name of the vertuous, will not so much labour in the outward shew, neither goe after the fashion of vaine persons. Chaste *Penelope*, a Heathen, will stand couered before her Suters. And will Christian women shew themselues so naked, as some doe, to the view of all? O impudencie! O immodest shew of lightnesse and vanitie!

Verse 11. *And Boaz answered and said vnto her, It hath fully beene shewed me, all that thou hast done vnto thy mother in law, since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come vnto a people, which thou knewest not heretofore.*

Boaz his reply vnto *Ruth*, giuing her the reasons of his kindnesse towards her a stranger, which was

was by relation made to him before this, of her vertues shewed in her loue to her mother in law, and in her grace and godlineffe, leauing her own country, to come and dwell amongst Gods people, though vnknowne to her aforetime.

And Boaz answered and said vnto her, It hath fully beene shewed mee, all that thou hast done. A good report, and that to the full, was spred abroad of Ruth: of which Boaz had taken notice, and for which he was so kind to her, as hee here acknowledgeth. Whence note, I. That vertue shall not want Trumpeters to sound out her praises to the full, Psal. 37. 6. Ruth was made renowned among all the people, & Ioseph at length throughout all the land of Egypt: which is Gods mercy for encouragement to vertue; and this will those doe which loue vertue in others. Therefore let such as would be renowned, strue to be vertuous: It is the worthiest matter of praise and commendation. It procureth loue, and that true loue of such as neuer see vs, as did Salomons fame, and so Christs; It causeth an honorable remembrance after death: It is such goods as cannot bee lost; but beauty may with sicknesse and age bee defaced, strength also may decay: So Haman may lose his honour, and Iob may be dispossessed of all his riches in a moment, but vertue abideth for euer. Lastly, this is pleasing to God, to all good men, yea and makes the Angels to attend vpon vs, as the Lord hath put the charge vpon them. And yet the praise hereof is least respected, but men seeke praises which be after mans wisdom, earthly

*...Vinit post su-
nera virtus.
Bias, Omnia
mea mecum
porto.*

earthly and sensuall: as *Absaloms* for beauty; *Hamans* for fauour with a King; *Achitophels* for worldly policy; others for riches and authority ouer their brethren; which yet they are no lasting praises, soone lost, and neuer afford true loue in the hearts of men, as vertue doth: which may minister comfort to such as bee vertuous, who deserue true praises, & they shall not want them; they shall not neede to bragge, as the proud hypocriticall Pharise, of their well-doing. Grant that many now will not giue them their due, some of pride, other through enuie, and a third sort of ill will cannot speake well: yet when they be dead, euen such as did dispraise them, will then praise them: but howsoeuer, they shall at the last Day receiue praises of Iesus Christ before the Angels & all the world, and be euerlastingly rewarded for the same. II. That *well-doing procureth fauour to the poore, though strangers, at the hands of the vertuous*: for this was the cause of *Boaz* loue to *Ruth*, as here he acknowledgeth: and this is true godlinesse, to loue others for their goodnes. Would you poore find fauour? Labour to be vertuous: for God will procure the liking of others, and moue them to doe you good, as God did *Boaz* heart towards *Ruth*. This is the way to doe you good, and not to liue idly, lewdly, and by flatterie and talebearing, to think to prosper, which is the trade of too many poore ones. With some for a while they may find fauour, but in the meane space they procure hatred of some others, and at length vwill be abhorred of all.

PRO. 4. 18.

Gal. 6. 10.
Mat. 25. & 30.

all. And here let the rich learne vpon whom to bestow freely their kindnesse, and whom to loue and respect, euen the godly poore, such as bee of the household of faith, for in them Christ is relieued, and such shall not lose their reward. If you aske, Who are these godly poore? I answer, Euen such as *Ruth*, which get a good name by their vertuous liues, their duty done to their betters, their painefulnesse in labour; their conscience of Religion: These be the godly poore, and not the stubborne, the idle, the irreligious, swearing, fighting, railing, drunken poore, who are more worthy of punishment, than reliefe.

Iob. 1.
Act. 10. 2.
Reu. 2. 1, 2.

Vnto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband.] Thus *Boaz* beginneth to particularize her vertues; and the first here is her louing carriage, and praise-worthy behauiour vnto her mother in law, not onely while her husband liued, but euer after, not ceasing to loue because he was dead, for whose sake shee first was occasioned to loue her. Due prayses can be shewed in particular vertues. See it in the praises of *Iob*, *Cornelius*, the Angell of *Ephesus*. And therefore in praising any, wee must bee able to instance in those things which deserue such praises, else it is sottish ignorance, or grosse flatterie, or both. Againe note, That whom we loue for our friends sake being alive, if loue be vnfaigned, it will appeare, when they be dead. This is *Ruths* loue vnto *Naomi*, *Davids* to *Mephibosheth* for *Ionathans* sake. True loue is a fountaine that neuer can be drawne drie. This reproveth the loose loue of many, who can loue, and lightly turne

turne it into hatred of the same person vpon small occasions; such also as can loue their friend for his time, but when he is dead, will neglect all respect to euery one of his, whom in his dayes they pretended to loue.

And how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come vnto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. This was rare loue, and a very great measure of grace, for Religion sake, to forsake naturall parents; for a mother in Law, her owne country, for a strange nation and people: shee must needs bee endued with a strong faith, and an extraordinary measure of loue to Religion, and the worship of the true God. By which wee see, *that faith and feruent loue overcome all difficulties*; euen nature it selfe, as here in her, so in *Abraham*, when leauing his countrey, he travelled hee knew not whither, and did offer vp *Isaac* at Gods bidding, and put away *Ismael*, and al three without gain saying, cherefully. These ouercame carnall reason, and this desire of pleasing God, made *Saint Paul* a zealous Professor. Faith made *Gideon* to leaue thousands behind him, and to bee content to enter the battaile whith 300. against many thousands; so did *Ioshua* by Gods direction command seuen Priests to goe seuen times about the walls of *Iericho*, to beate them downe with sound of *Rammes* hornes. This faith & loue made many profelytes and Heathen to become Christians, and Christians in the time of bloody persecutions, to forsake all for Christs sake, and his Gospell, as the

N

Apostles

Heb. 11.
Gen. 12.
Gen. 21. & 21.
Gal. 1. 10.

Iud. 7. 7, 12.
& 8. 10.
135000.
Iosh. 6.

1. Ioh. 5. 4, 5.

2. Chro. 25. 6,
9, 10.

Apostles spake of themselves vnto Christ. This faith and loue of God will vanquish the world, and will make *Moses* leaue the Court of *Pharaoh*, to bee with Gods people in affliction, and will make *Amaziah* to separate himselfe from the wicked, and make light of an 100. talents of siluer; Yea so powerfull is faith and loue of God, as they will ouercome our selues, euen to make light of our selues, and our liues, for the Lords sake, as we see in the blessed Martyrs, suffering cruell torments for the truth sake; for the power of faith and spirituall loue is supernaturall, and is wrought and so assisted by Gods Spirit, as no worldly, or fleshly impediments can hinder them in the way to eternall life. Therefore must we labour for these graces aboue all things, if wee would be masters ouer our selues; if wee would preuaile against all hinderances of our saluation. These will bridle lusts, contemne vaine honours, resist Satan and his temptations: and seeing they are so powerfull, hence may we see whether wee haue this faith and true loue, if we can ouercome our corrupt nature, carnall reason, and this euill world: but if these ouermaster vs, then want wee this faith and loue, from which those be farre off, who are led like beasts by nature, like sensuall men by lusts, corrupt reason, and by this vnconstant world, and the vanities thereof. Though they doe beare the name of Christians, yet Christs power is farre from them. Note further hence, why hee speaketh thus to *Ruth*: euen to giue her to know the true cause of his kinnesse, and

and good respect towards her, euen her godlineſſe and grace; which may teach, That *vertue and grace are the greateſt motives to incite great men, which be alſo good men, vnto the workes of mercy and bounty to the poore*: as we here ſee by Boaz ſpeeches; for vertue is louely to them which are vertuous, though the parties be neuer ſo poore. Let the poore labour for grace and godlineſſe, that they may find mercy at the hands of the wealthy, for if they feare God, he wil be their ſpokes-man, hee will moue the hearts of others to doe them good. Though this bee the way to procure fauour, yet commonly we ſee the poore idle, and too lewd of life; and yet they murmure, curſe, and rage, if they be not relieved: for they thinke they ought to be relieved, euen becauſe they bee poore, though neuer ſo wicked, though they will hardly labour to take any paines to liue, when of ſuch the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, that they ſhould not be relieved. *Hee that will not labour, let him not eate*, ſaith the Apoſtle. As this is for inſtruction to the poore: ſo the rich from Boaz may learne, on whom to beſtow their fauours, and workes of mercy, euen vpon the godly, the houſhold of faith: for in them Chriſt is relieved, in them they doe lend vnto the Lord, who vwill repay them to the full, and greatly reward them. But of this a little before in the beginning of this verſe.

2. Theſ. 3.

Gal. 6. 10.
Mat. 25 & 10.
Pro. 19. 17.
Pſal. 41. 1, 2, 3.

Verse 12. *The Lord recompence thy worke, and a full reward be giuen thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.*

THese words are a prayer and blessing pronounced out of the mouth of *Boaz* vpon poore *Ruth*. which doth maruailously set out the pietie of this man. Here may be noted, who makes this request, to whom, for what, for whom, and why.

The Lord recompence thy worke.] This rich *Boaz* prayeth for poore *Ruth*. Whence note, I. That there is a recompence of reward from God, euen to the poore for well-doing: this the prayer of *Boaz* sheweth, who else would not haue begged it at Gods hand; and we must know, that the Lord in promising to reward well-doing, excepts against none, rich nor poore, but will recompence the well-doer, be he whosoever, with him is no respect of persons, but he that worketh righteousnesse, is accepted of him; and godlinesse (in whomsoever it be) hath the Promise of this life and of the life to come. Let this comfort the poore in their well-doing, and in their works of vertue and godlinesse.

Quest. Here it may be demanded, what good workes can the poore doe, to expect reward from God, seeing they haue no riches?

Ans. A good worke is not, nor stands not onely in giuing almes, and such like things, for then should onely the rich be doers of good workes:

Act. 10.

1. Tim. 4. 8.

workes : but many other things are good workes, and approued of God, and which he will recompence, which the poore, that haue not one peny, may doe; as to doe the duety of loue and obedience to their parents, or to others to whom they owe it; to forsake idolatrie for the true worship of God; to leaue their countrey for the Lords sake and for his people; to forsake their old heathenish acquaintance and kindred. All which *Ruth* did: and these may the poore doe, which workes God will recompence; and all other duties which one oweth to another, in any sort, being done in faith, in loue, and in obedience to God, they are good workes, and the Lord will reward the same; euen the honest and painefull seruice of a poore seruant, as the Apostle teacheth. Wee see then, that the poorest may doe good workes, though not such, as commonly are so called, to the doing whereof the worlds wealth is required; and yet herein a poore soules two mites are more acceptable to God, then the superfluities of the rich. II. *The rich*, from the example of Boaz, *may not thinke scorue to pray, and that very heartily for the poore.* It is a very rare example to see so mighty a man of wealth, and so high in authoritie, to be so much taken vp in his affection, in considering the poore womans vertue, as to breake forth into so vehement a prayer as this was, as appeareth by the doubling of the words: and yet this ought rich men to doe, if they thinke that the poore are not excluded out of the communion of Saints, and that they be

Col. 3. 24.

the children of God with them, as they are taught in the Lords Prayer. This would shew a great measure of grace, this would encourage much the poore to goe on in well-doing. But, alas, this comes not once into the thought of a rich man; he thinks the poore bound to pray for him, but himselfe not at all, vpon any occasion for them, because he thinkes he can pleasure them, but they can no way pleasure him; so he considereth onely outward and personall benefit, and not the excellencie of vertue, and fruit thereof to them and others, as Boaz did.

And a full reward be giuen thee.] A good man thinks his mercies and kindnesse are not enough to recompence and reward the vertue, and workes of well-doing in others: for he valueth vertue about wealth, and about the price of all these transitorie things. Againe note, that there is to be expected a full reward for a good worke; I say, first a reward, yet so, that it be looked for in mercy, and not in merit; for God hath promised a reward, and that in many places of Scripture; and then it shall be a full reward, which Boaz prayeth for here, to be giuen to Ruth: which shall be certainly accomplished in the life to come, & here sometime in a great measure, as it was to Ruth, in giuing her Boaz for an husband, which he little thought of in this prayer, that he should be the reward of her godlinesse and grace. This is an excellent encouragement to vertue and good workes.

Of the Lord God of Israel.] Israel was Iacobs name, and now applied to all his posterity the people

people of God: Thus was the true God called, by the name of *God*, noting the persons in the Trinity; and of *Lord*, noting his substance, and being of himselfe, as the originall words to the Learned doe shew; and he is the Lord God of Israel, because he chose the Israelites to be his people before all other nations of the Earth, a type of the Elect number, called The Israel of God. To this true and euerliuing God, doth *Boaz* make request for a full and perfect reward, shewing, that *it is not in man, but it must be God that can make a full payment to godlinesse*; the full reward is to be giuen of him, and therefore from him it is to be expected, who hath the recompence in his hand, in full perfection.

Vnder whose wings.] A figuratiue speech vsuall in Psalmes to expresse the loue of God, and the protection of such as be his; for as a Hen nourisheth and defendeth her young ones vnder her wings, from the Kite and other rauenous birds: so doth the Lord care for his people, to keepe them in safety from dangers. *They are safely protected, who come to the Lord and trust in him*: for God hath vndertaken to protect such, and he is able to defend them, and he will doe it, because he loueth them. Oh then, let vs labour to be of the Lords people, to goe vnto him, and to trust in him! Men being in danger here, get into great mens seruice for protection; and we being in greater danger, yea in such dangers euery day, on the right and left hand, from which none can deliuer vs, but God, should not we seeke his ser-

Deut. 7. 6.

Gal. 6.

Psal. 17. 8. and
57. & 36. 7.
& 61

Deut. 33. 29.

Psal. 91.

Zach. 2. 8.

Pfal. 61. 4.
 Psal. 17. 7 &
 57. 1.
 Psal. 17. 8. and
 119. 94.
 Psal. 63. 7.
 Psal. 34. & 91.
 Iob. 1.

Zach. 2. 5.

Heb. 11.

uice for protection? And being in it, let vs be comforted, as sure of his aide; let vs trust in him, as did *David*; for he saueth all them that put their trust in him. Let vs in neede runne to him for aid, as did *David*, and desired to be saued by him, and let vs reioyce vnder the shadow of his wings: for his Angels shall guard vs, and pitch their Tents about vs: he will make a hedge about vs also: and if this will not be defence enough, then will he be a wall of fire, so sure and safe shall we be from all our enemies.

Thou art come to trust.] Boaz taketh it for granted, that shee had faith: for they that come to God, must beleue that he is. This draweth vs to God, this keepeth vs with him, when we be come vnto him. Now, that we may know what is here meant by faith, we must vnderstand that there be degrees hereof: as to beleue there is a God, against all the Atheists, which deny this principle in nature. I I. That that which we beleue to be God, be the true God, euen God by nature, and none other, and that he is not many, but one God onely, against all Idolaters and worshippers of false gods. I I I. That hee be such a one as hee reuealeth himselfe in his Word, and so conceived of, and no otherwise, a Spirit, True, Iust, Mercifull, Almighty and so forth, against all carnall conceits and fleshly apprehensions of God, as is in the ignorant multitude, & the blind Papists our Aduersaries. I V. That we haue sure confidence in him, wholly relying vpon him, and commending our selues so to his protection, as vnto a safe

safe place, where we thinke to be sure: and so the word in the originall is herevsed. The knowledge hereof should make vs to examine our faith, whether we thus trust in him, and haue the sauing faith, which maketh not ashamed. Such a faith is, First, without hypocrisie, being faith vnfaigned. Secondly, It is accompanied with the Spirit of God. Thirdly, Where it is, there is inward peace of conscience, and freedome to draw nigh to God with boldnesse. Fourthly, It sheweth it selfe in a godly conuersation; for the heart is purged, and pure, and a good conscience is ioyned with it: it worketh also by loue, and sheweth it selfe by workes, and so causeth obedience to the good pleasure and will of God, as we may see in *Noah* building the Arke, and in *Abraham* offering vp *Isaac*. Fifthly, and lastly, it maketh vs to reioyce in the meanes of saluation, and to bee of one heart and soule with the Beleeuers, and such as wee perceiue to feare God. By all which, our faith may be examined; and by these may we know how little there is in men in these dayes, where and when there is such hypocrisie, so little true loue of the Word, or of them that loue it, and so much wickednesse and lewdnesse; they make open proclamation, that this grace of true sauing faith was neuer grafted in their hearts.

*non recepit se
in locum, ubi
sit cecidit ab in-
iuria.*

1. Tim. 1. 5.
Gal. 3. 14.
Rom. 5. 1.
Heb. 4.
Eph. 3. 12.

A. 1. 5. 9.
1. Tim. 1. 5.
Gal. 5. 6.
Iam. 2. 7.

Heb. 11.
A. 13. 48.
& 4. 32.

Verse

Verse 13. *Then she said, Let me find fauour in thy sight, my Lord, for thou hast comforted mee, and for that thou hast spoken friendly vnto thine hand-maid, though I be not like vnto one of thine hand-maidens.*

RUTHS speech vnto Boaz, acknowledging his fauour with great humility, shewing what it wrought in her, and the reason also thereof, with a debasing of her selfe as inferior to his seruants.

Then shee said, Let me find fauour in thy sight. These words may be read two wayes, either thus as here, and then they shew Ruths desire of the countenance of his fauour. For *the poore doe not onely desire to get the rich mans good will, but would gladly haue it continued.* And a thankfull mind seeketh the continuance of vnderferved fauours, and not *Hannus* part, 2. Sam. 10. Or the words may be read thus, *I doe find fauour in thy sight.* And it is then, as if shee had said, It is enough that I a poore stranger find this fauour in thine eyes; so are the words to be taken, Gen. 33. 15. and so in 2. Sam. 16. 4. Shee did not expect so much at his hands; and therefore knowing her selfe to haue deserued nothing at his hands, shee rests very thankfull for this so great a kindnesse: For where nothing is deserued, and nothing owing, there to finde speciall fauour, deserueth great thanks: Which heere shee acknowledgeth; and in the like case so must we. The choise of the reading I leaue to mens will; either may stand, and the Learned

1. Sam. 1. 18.

2. Sam. 16. 4.

Learned in the tongue vse either; and our last Translation in the margent leaueth it free. The thing shee either asketh, or acknowledgeth, is fauour, or mercy, compassion and good will (all which the word signifieth) in his eyes: By which word shee confesseth all his kindneses in word and deed shewed to her, to be of his meere goodnesse and good will; and so should workes of mercy come from the rich to the poore: the eye of the rich looking vpon the poore, should worke compassion in the heart; then doe such find fauour in their eyes, when they are beheld and looked vpon with respect to do them good. This fauour in the eyes, is not in euery rich man, when he beholdeth the needy; it must be a good *Boaz* that hath such eyes, for a *Nabal* wants them.

My Lord.] A title of reuerence shee giueth him. The word signifieth such a one as beareth vp the familie or Common-wealth as a Pillar: thus the name *Lord* importeth. I wish this title to be remembred of the great Ones, that they may shew themselues Pillars and vpholders of the Common-wealth and of their houses, and not destroyers of them. The thing I note, is this; *It is lawfull to giue honorable titles vnto man, as befitteb their place;* So did *Aaron* to *Moses*; *Hannah* to *Samuel*; *Obadiah* to *Elijah*; and *Hazael* to *Elisha*; and so did the *Hittites* to *Abraham*; so as both such as were in, and such as were out of the Church vsed such rearmes of reuerence; and therefore may they be vsed, as *Saint Luke* did, and also *Saint Paul*; herein taking heed of vniust titles,
of

*Misericordia,
compassio, bene-
uolentia, gratia,
fauor, &c.*

Num.

Num. 12. 11.
1. Sam. 2.
1. King. 18. 7.
2. King. 8. 12.
Gen. 23. 6.

Luk. 1. 3.
Act. 26. 25.

of base flattery, & the excesse in giuing euen iust titles. Note againe another thing, that *the more humble men of good place & wealth shew themselves to be, the more honour they get*, as we see here: Shee did him reuerence before, verse 10. in a most humble gesture, when shee saw his worldly kindnesse: but now perceiuing the ground to be the loue of her vertues, and so himselfe to be a louer of vertue, shee calleth him Lord, encreasing in her honouring of him, as shee tooke knowledge of his worthinesse, the more for his loue of vertue and godlinesse, then for the outward and worldly kindnesse. Here is wisdom, and an excellent example teaching how to honour men truly, how farre, and especially for what. This instructeth men to carry themselves lowly, which are of place, and to expresse their loue of vertue: it shall not make them be lesse, but more esteemed by much of those that be godly and wise; else were they reprobable. *Ionathans* humility and goodnesse lost him no reuerence with *Dauid*. They be counted clownishly base, or foolishly proud, or ill-mannered, which will giue lesse honour to a man for his vertues and humility, when as he is to be esteemed for that cause more worthy of encrease of honour with men of wisdom and vnderstanding.

For that thou hast comforted me:] to wit, a stranger, a widdow, and poore, euen me hast thou comforted by such gracious speeches, so full of mercy and pietie. The word *comforted*, by an Antiphrasis signifieth a freedome from griefe: which implyeth, that before, she was not without heavinesse

1. Sam. 30. 41.

Gen. 24.
64.

uineſſe in this her poore eſtate: for a widow poore and a ſtranger in the place of her abode, how can ſhee not be ſad and penſiue? *Afflictions are not ioyous to any for the preſent*, they will make ſad the heart of the beſt for a while, ſo long as we carry about this corrupt heart and nature of ours; and therefore let men looke vpon the afflicted with compaſſion, to comfort them. Many wayes did Boaz comfort poore Ruth: Firſt, by a louing appellation, calling her his daughter, verſe 8. Secondly, by allowing her to gleane in his fields, and willing her ſo to continue with his maidens, verſe 8, 9. Thirdly, by charging his ſeruants in her hearing, not to touch her, verſe 9. Fourthly, by graunting her freedome to drinke with his ſeruants when ſhee ſhould be thirſtie. Fifthly, by commending her vertues, and making mention of her former well-doing. And ſixtly, in heartily praying for her. Thus may the poore afflicted be comforted by the wealthy and perſons of authority, and eſpecially in praying their vertues and praying for them: for the godly eſteeme highly of the prayers of the godly: for they know that God heareth them. The prayer of faith and ſeruency of ſpirit auaileth much, and God hath promiſed to heare one for another, and it is a ſigne of the Lords great diſpleaſure, when he will not haue one to pray for others. Therefore let vs make much of the prayers of the godly, for they are comfortable. Saint Paul beſought the Saints to pray for him, and that very often: and this he doth almoſt in euery Epistle, he intreateth the Romanes,

Iam. 5. 16.

Gen. 10. 7.

Iob 42. 8.

1. Sam. 16. 1.

Ier. 7. 16 and

11. 14. and 14.

11.

Rom. 15. 30.
 Ephe. 6. 18.
 2. Cor. 1. 11.
 2. Thes. 3. 1.
 1. Thes. 5. 25.
 Heb. 13. 18, 19.
 Phil. 1. 19.
 Col. 4. 3.

נפשו נחמה ונחמה

Gen. 50. 21.

Osca 2. 14.

Esa. 40. 2.

Iohn 11. 19.

Romanes, Ephesians, Philippians, Corinthians, Thessalonians, Colossians, the Hebrewes, all but the backsliding Galatians: a thing worthy of note.

And for that thou hast spoken friendly vnto thine handmaid.] This sheweth wherein thee tooke the greatest comfort, euen in his last words, in praising her vertues, and praying for her: which sheweth, what it is wherein *the godly poore take speciall comfort, euen in their good name for well-doing, and in the prayers of such as be godly.* To be praised of the godly for well-doing, is great comfort: for they be the best Iudges thereof, and they be the best men; and their prayers, as before is noted, are auailable with God. Let vs then strue to get a good name with them, and to haue their prayers, and requests to God for vs; and when we get these, let vs be comforted therein. The word translated *friendly*, is in the Hebrew, *to the heart*, and so the Septuagints translate it: *The heart is affected with comfortable words.* Thus Ioseph also spake to the heart of his brethren: for the heart in aduersity wisheth comfort, and when the same is offered, it reioyceth therein. Therefore must we so speake to the afflicted, as we may make glad the heart of the oppressed. So doth the Lord speake to his people: and so commandeth he his Prophets to speake vnto them. Now, to speake to the heart of another, is thus: First, when we speake with a feeling of their afflictions from our owne hearts: thus the Iewes comforted *Mary and Martha.* The *Syriack* there is, *They spake with their*

their heart; and so spake Saint Paul to the Thessalonians: And secondly, to speake such things as tend to their comfort, and what we know in their case may comfort them, as Joseph did to his brethren; and as the Prophet Esay sheweth in Cha. 40.2. If this be our duety and our mercy to the distressed, then they offend against mercy and charity, who speake vncomfortably vnto the afflicted, as the Jewes did to our Saviour vpon the crosse; and the friends of Iob vnto Iob, which much displeased the Lord, and kindled his wrath against them. Boaz before called her his daughter, but shee nameth her selfe to be his handmaid: a tearme of humility, and a note of modesty in her selfe, who was nothing lifted vp with a proud conceit of her selfe, for all his fauour and commendations: For godly and humble persons are in themselves no whit the higher minded for the good that is spoken of them, nor for the countenance of great persons towards them: for they truly know themselves to be nothing, and that all is from God, the Fountaine of goodnesse. Therefore there is no danger to praise these vpon iust cause to their faces for their comfort, as Boaz doth Ruth here, especially being in a low estate, and in affliction.

Though I be not like one of thine handmaidens.] Thus doth Ruth debase her selfe: for such as be truly religious, haue a low esteeme of themselves: The examples are pregnant in Moses, Gideon, Abigail, and the Centurion, who held himselfe not worthy that Christ should come vnder the roofof

1. Thes. 2. 11.

Gen. 50. 21.

Exod. 3. 13.

Judg. 6. 15.

1. Sam. 25. 24.

Prou. 22. 4.
and 15. 33.

Phil. 2. 3.

Exod. 3. 11.
1. Sam. 13. 23.

1. Sam. 25. 41.

Gen. 13. 8.

Num. 16. 12,
25.

of his house: so lowly thought he of himselfe. Because they know and feele their infirmities, they haue ouermastered pride and selfe-loue, they acknowledge that in themselues, that is, in their flesh, dwelleth no good, and therefore they thinke and speake of themselues very humbly. Which grace we must labour for: for it will procure loue, yea honour: for he that humbleth himselfe, shall be exalted. Now, the true signes of such as be lowly in their owne eyes, are these. First, they thinke better of others than of themselves, as *Ruth* doth here, and as men should doe. Secondly, they be loth to vndertake great and high matters, as *Moses* to goe to *Pharaoh*, and to bring Israel out of Egypt; and *Danid* to be *Sauls* sonne in law. Thirdly, if they be aduanced, they receiue honour with great humilitie, as *Abigail* did. Fourthly, in their high place and prosperity they be not of a proud and hautie spirit, as we may see in *Ioseph*, *Moses*, *Danid*, *Ester* ruled by *Mordecai*, and in the Apostle Saint *Paul*. Fifthly, they scorne no duety, though meane, if it be a duety for them to doe. *Abraham* the Vncle will intreat peace at the hands of his Nephew *Lot*; if *Dathan* and *Abiram* scorne to come to *Moses*, he will goe out to them: they stand not vpon their place, so as they neglect what is fit to be done. Which iustly reproveth those which haue too high an esteeme of themselues: which pride ariseth, First, of an ouerweaning of themselues of their owne gifts, or what they thinke to be good in them. Secondly, by onely looking vpon the good

good in them, and what by their place and birth they may clayme, but not at all of the evils in themselves, by which they haue cause to be cast downe. And thirdly, by comparing themselves either with their inferiours, or with their equals, vpon whom yet they cannot looke with an equall eye, but with some better esteeme of themselves, by some one thing or other, wherein they would find themselves to excell them; but they neuer looke vpon their superiours, except with the eye of enuie, nor vpon any in that wherein they be ouermatched, which maketh them so proud: the true signes whereof are these; First, they highly esteeme of themselves, and very meanely of others, and that often of their betters, as did *Gaal*. Secondly, they haue aspiring spirits, and thinke themselves worthy of higher places, as *Adam* and *Eue*; *Absalom*; with *Corah* and his company. Thirdly, they are in prosperity impatient, and cannot endure the neglect of duty towards them, which they looke for, as *Haman*. Lastly, they disdain to be at command of their betters, as did *Dathan* and *Abiram*, and *Hagar* to be in subiection to her Mistresse: for they thinke themselves, as good as others.

Quest. Here it may be asked *how Ruth was unlike to Boaz handmaidens?*

Answ. It is thought shee so spake, because shee was not an Israelitish borne, one within the Couenant and of Gods people, but a Moabitish woman, of an idolatrous kindred, and incestuous race. In which respect she might well thinke her selfe inferiour to them: for *the children of the*

O

Church

Iudg. 9. 28, 29.

Ester 3. 5. and
5. 9.
Num. 16. 12.
Gen. 16.

*Church are more excellent than any other people whatsoever. David therefore held it better to be a doer-keeper in Gods house, than to dwell in the Tents of the vngodly; and Moses iudged the Israelites in affliction more happy, then the Egyptians and himselfe in Pharaoes court; for the Churches children are Gods Children, when all other are but his seruants; they are in the couenant of God, the other strangers; they haue spirituall gifts communicated to them, the other enioy but temporall fauours; they are highly esteemed of God, and bought with a price, when the other are accounted but as whelps, as Christ spake to the Canaanitish woman, and are left in their spirituall captiuity; they haue Angels for their guard, and commanded to attend vpon them, the other haue not so: Lastly, they haue inheritance in Heauen, but the wicked shall goe into Hell, and all the people which forget God. And therefore in this respect *Ruth* might speake truely, though now shee was become a Profelyte, and so was to be held as one of the Lords people.*

Verse 14. And Boaz said vnto her, At meale time come thou hither, and eate of the bread, and dip thy morsell in the vineger. And shee sate besides the Reapers: and he reached her parched corne, and shee did eate, and was sufficed, and left.

THe last words of *Boaz* in this first conference with *Ruth*, still expressing more and more his loue vnto her. First, in calling her to their vi-
&uals. Then, in giuing her some himselfe, euē
so

so much, as was sufficient for the present, and more also: for shee left thereof. So here Boaz inuitheth her to dine with them; then shee sitteth downe, he welcommeth her, and shee eateth and is sufficed.

And Boaz said vnto her.] The more thankfull she shewed her selfe, the more fauour she found: for *thankfulness* and *humilitie* increase fauour, as we see here: Which two vertues are so louely, as they draw the liking of all men vnto them: humilitie graceth a mans person, and another thinketh himselfe honoured by a humble carriage towards him, and thanks is the praising of his goodnesse, and an acknowledgement of being beholden, which doe much moue mens hearts vnto kindnesse and fauour: very thankfull was Saint Paul, and so was David to them which did them good: whose examples we must follow.

At meale time come thou hither.] Boaz knew her to be poore, and therefore he helpeth euery way to supply her wants, in the field for the present, but he leaueth her to her labour, to provide for afterwards. And thus the poore are to be sustained in their present wants so, as they may yet follow their calling, and labour therein. In saying at Meale time, it noteth that there were set times to eat, & preparatiō made for it. And so indeed do good householders, as we see in the commendations of the good hufwife: for this argueth a care and loue to seruants, and also preuēteth their lingring in their labour, when they need not murmure for their dyet, nor long waite for it. This care should be in the Gouernours of families, which reproveth, First, such

Phil. 4. 15.
1. Sam. 30. 26.

Prou. 31. 15.

Prou. 11. 24.

Deut. 25. 4.

Prou. 12. 10.

1. King. 5. 11.

Lauater in
hunc locum.Iob 31. 17, 18.
Nehc. 5. 18.Luk. 14. 13, 14.
1. Sam. 25. 11.

as can call vpon their seruants to set them to worke, but are too negligent in preparing food for them, whole some and sufficient. Secondly, such as doe prouide, but not in due season. Thirdly, such as will prouide in time, but will hardly allow them time to eate, for hastening them to their worke. But these cause seruants to pocket, to steale, to haue their secret meetings to the great damage of the family, and so make good that which *Salomon* saith, *There is that with-holdeth more then is meete; but it tendeth to pouerty.* This also is contrary to that precept in some sort, *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the Oxe, which treadeth out the corne.* And it is contrary to the condition of such as be godly: for such a one is mercifull to his beast, then much more to his seruant. *And eate of the bread, and dip thy morsell in the vineger.* Here is their household fare and haruest mens feeding: they had bread of wheat, but the vsuall was of barley, being most commonly mentioned, *Iudg. 7. 13. 2. King. 4. 42. Iosu. 6. 9.* as the ordinary bread. Vineger was vsed in hot countreyes, both to stirre vp appetite, and to quench thirst; they vsed also oyle, *1. King. 5. 11.* In Italy they vsed in haruest to mingle vineger and wine and water together; this fare, prouided for *Boaz* family, he allowed *Ruth* to eate of. For a mercifull man will not onely relieue the poore abroad, but sometimes at home with the food of his family, as *Iob* did. He limits not his goodnesse, but is ready to helpe as he seeth occasion, and as the poore shall stand in need. Let the rich then this way relieue the poore, (and not play the *Nabals* part)

if

if reason so require. Note againe here, what homely and plaine fare the godly in former times were contented to live with vsually. See this in Abraham his intertainment, Bread, Butter, Milke and Veale; he runneth to fetch the Calfe himselfe; Sarah bakes the Cakes, and the man dresseth the Calfe, for which the strangers stay. Poore feeding had the Prophets; though *Elisha* bade set on the great pot, it was but homely fare. They were not so dainty-toothed as now men be, which can eate nothing but what is finely cookt. The first sweet tooth that in Scripture I doe reade of, was old *Isaac*; hee loued sauourie meate, which *Esau* prouided for him; in whom hee tooke such pleasure for his venison and sweet meates, that he would haue turned the blessing due to *Isaac*, vpon him, which that prophane *Esau* had formerly sold for a messe of pottage, in the sale of his birth-right. The godly should not eate for the palate, and to please appetite, but to preferue nature, which is contented with a little, and wholesome, though it want the daintie cooking. Hungrie stomacks, and bodies well laboured, will not much care for sawce; this daintinesse ariseth of idlenesse, and too much plentie, which doe breed diseases, and shorten life in many. Let these nice stomakes know, that *Esau*; who no doubt fed daintily, that could prouide so well for his father; yet when he came once home hungrie, could bee glad of hunters fare, and sup vp a messe a pottage: such a delicate Cooke is Hunger, which can season and make sauourie very homely cheere. They

2. King. 4. 38.

Gen. 27. 4.

Luk. 16. 1.

Prou. 21. 16.

Ezech. 16.

that despise plaine feeding, and loue to fare delicately every day, must remember, that it was the practice of him that went to hell, he fared deliciously euery day. This hardens the heart of such, not to regard the poore, as it did his. This is chargeable, and bringeth vnto pouertie, and with-holdeth men from doing good works: for three things haue destroyed charitie among vs in rich men and Gentlemen, as they be called, to wit, costly buildings, costly rayment, and costly fare. Lastly, this engendreth lust, whence follow many enormities in them which follow idleneffe, one of the sinnes of Sodom. This moderate feeding, and homely wholesome fare, which formerly men were content to feed vpon, may reprove the daintinesse of seruants, which now adayes will hardly bee content with such fare in their Masters seruice, as when after comming to their owne hand, they would bee glad of the worst bit thereof: but thus it is when men know not when they be well, neither vnderstand what it is to bee maintained of others, till they come to find themselves.

And she sate besides the reapers.] She did not impudently thrust in her selfe amongst them, but modestly tooke place somewhere besides them. Whose example teacheth, that *free fauours are to be modestly receiued of the poore.* It is ciuilitie, it is a vertue praise worthy. And therefore let the poore learne modesty, learne to carry themselves as they ought, they shall procure more fauour then the impudent, & the vnmanly beggers.

And

And he reached her parched corne: That is, come steapt and dried, and made for to eate; this wee reade of elsewhere also, as a common food, 1.Sam.17.17. and 2.Sam.17.28. Leuit.23.14. This was of the best food at the table; this kind of food was presented to *Dauid* and his followers; and the same carried by him from his father to his brethren, an Ephah of it: so *Abigail* brought to *Dauid* five measures hereof, and of this *Boaz* giueth to *Ruth*, noting his kind courtesie to her: for it is a note of respect, when the Master of the table reacheth of that which is before him unto others. So did *Elkanah* to *Hannah*, whom he specially loued; yea, sometime thus did our Sauour to his Disciples, which men doe now follow, but oftner therein shewing their owne good manners, as it is accounted, then making it the token of loue; which by these things now in this complementing age cannot bee discerned. Obserue hence further, that a godly rich man can be content, that the godly poore taste of the best of that which is before him: for such he knoweth are neere to him in Christ, and deare to God his Father. He gaue not to *Ruth* what hee would haue giuen to his dogs, or what is hardly fit for dogs, or good for none but for dogs. Many indeed giue to their dogs what might be fit for the poore: (an euill sin vnder the Sunne, which may cause them or theirs to want:) and other giue onely to the poore, what else they would giue their dogs, by a too base estimation of their poore brethren; such gifts are not esteemed of God, though hee say, that

Iosh.5.11.

2.Sam.17.28.

1.Sam.17.17.

1.Sam.25.18.

1.Sam.1.4.

Luk.24.30.

Ioh.21.30.

what is giuen to them, is lent to him: but it must bee an Almes beſeeming them, and fit for a Chriſtian to giue to a man, and not vnto a dog.

Deut. 11. 15.
Leuit. 25. 5.
Pſal. 37. 3.

And ſhe did eat, and was ſatisfied, and left.] As ſhe ſate downe to eate, being bidden, ſo ſhe did eate as much as did ſuffice, and left. Which ſheweth, firſt, her *plentie*, which is a *bleſſing of God, to haue enough to ſuffice nature*; for ſo God promiſeth to his. Now, this bleſſing ſtands in three things; firſt, in health with a good ſtomake, that nature may receiue food for nourishment: ſecondly, in competencie of food, and wholeſome withall: thirdly, in Gods bleſſing of the ſame receiued, that it may ſtrengthen vs: none of theſe can bee wanting to the neceſſarie preſeruati- on of life: for ſtomake without food, food without health and ſtomake, and both without Gods bleſſing, are not able to ſaue life; where therefore they con- curre, men haue cauſe to bleſſe God: ſo much for the *plentie*. In the next is ſhewed her moderati- on: ſhee ate not to ſatiety, but what was ſuffici- ent: for *moderate feeders eate only to content nature*; and that is ſufficient which reſreſheth the body, and keepeth it apt for labour, and not that which ſatiſfieth the vnruely appetite, but ouer- chargeth nature. This teacheth vs to eate what may ſuf- fice, and be thankfull to God; two extremes are to be auoided: the one is ſuch abſtinence, where- by ſufficient food is not receiued to ſuſtaine life; either of a fooliſh deuotion, as ſome formerly haue done; or elſe of a deſperate neglect of life, which

which is the murthering of a mans selfe. The other is excesse, which is the sinne of gluttony, ouercharging nature, which sinne is forbidden in Scripture: it breedeth securitie in the heart, and diseases in the body, and so shortneth life. Such a one as is so giuen to this sinne, is a belly-god; he is like the Horse-leech, which sucks till it can draw blood no longer, but is ready to burst: He is like the Fish called Opos, or the Asse-fish, which hath the heart in the belly; so is this man set all on his panch. Hee is like the beast called Gulon, a name answerable to his nature, which eateth that which hee preyeth vpon, if it bee a horse, till all be deuoured, euer filling his belly, and then emptying it, and then falling to it againe, till all bee consumed: such a delight hath he in his appetite. And such beast-like men there haue been, who hauing filled their belly, haue for the greedy desire and vnsatiableneffe of their appetite, in variety of dishes and delicacies, wished their backe a belly. Such Gulons may from this beast behold themselues, how like him they bee; but I may say, how worse they bee; for he is a beast, and doth but like himselfe; but these bee men hauing reason to guide, and should haue Religion to bridle their deuouring nature, and brutish appetite. Lastly, note that *Ruth* left of that which was giuen her, which she also reserued to giue vnto her Mother in law, as it followes after in vers. 18.

Ver. 15. *And when she was risen up to glean,*

Boaz

Luk. 21. 34.

Rom. 13. 13.

Phil. 3.

Gefner.

Boaz commanded his yong men, saying, Let her gleane euen among the sheaues, and reproach her not.

RUTHS returne to her labour is here set downe, and her encouragement in the same by *Boaz* his loue, who charged his seruants to giue her leaue to gleane, and that among the sheaues, and not reproach her for so doing.

Before I come to the words, here it may be demanded, *Whether there was giuing of thanks,* seeing there sitting downe, and there arising vp to labour is mentioned, but not this duety of thanksgiuing, and prayer to God for a blessing vpon their food?

Ans. We are to thinke they did, though not here noted: for euery thing is not written which there was done; as *Ruths* thanks for her food, which we cannot thinke shee omitted, who before did shew her selfe euery way so thankfull. And there are such reasons to perswade vs that *Boaz* would not neglect this duety, as we may easily admit his giuing of thanks. First, his owne godlinesse and knowledge of his duety; and then the commandement of God, Deut. 8. 10. which he could not be ignorant of, and of which no doubt he made conscience. Therefore let not any from hence gather a loose liberty to neglect this duety, because the holy Writer mentioneth it not, but learne from other places to know it to be their duety. It was a custome among Christians, as at this day with vs; there is a commandement to glorifie God in eating and drinking. The creatures

1. Cor. 10. 30.

1. Cor. 10. 31.

tures of God are to be receiued with thanksgiving, and are sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. And holy men haue vsed it; *Samuel*, Saint *Paul*: yea when he and the people had long fasted, yet ate hee not before grace. Our blessed Saviour, the innocent Lambe of God, spotlesse and sinlesse, yet ate not, but first gaue thanks. It therefore is our duety, and besitting all, before they receiue food, to giue thanks: For what can our meate doe without Gods blessing? How soone haue some beene choaked, and haue ended their dayes suddainely? And doe we not remember, that the Israelites perished with meate in their mouthes? Neither let this duety be put off to children, as if it were too meane a duety for the Master of the table. Were it not grossly ridiculous, and a very scornfull part, for a man to receiue a fauour from a King, and then call his child to giue him thanks? Our Saviour put not this off to another, nor *Samuel*, nor *Paul*: are they not worthy imitation?

1. Tim. 4. 3, 5.

1. Sam. 9. 13.

A. C. 27. 35.

Ioh. 6. 11, 23.

And when shee was risen up to glean.] The History turneth againe to *Ruth*, and sheweth what shee did after her repast, and the liberall feeding allowed her by *Boaz*: she betooke her selfe to glean againe, and returned to her former labour. Whence we may learne, I. That the godly poore, by their fauours receiued, and helps in their need, are not the more negligent, but the rather the more painefull in their labours, as may be seene here in *Ruth*. For they know that such helps are for to stirre them vp to well-doing, which vse they make of them, and

2. Theſ. 3.

Eccleſ. 10. 17.

2. Theſ. 3. 10.

2. Theſ. 3. 8.

Prou. 31. 27.

Pſal. 128. 2.

and not to liue idly, as many doe, who are not worthy to eate. The poore are to follow *Ruths* ſteps, and learne for the mercies of men towards them, to continue painefull in their calling. II. That *the true uſe and end of receiuing food, is to ſtrengthen our bodies to preſerue them in labour.* *Ruth* eateth to ſuffice nature to returne to worke. The Apoſtle ioyneth eating and labour together, neither would he eate the bread of idleneſſe; nor the good woman, commended in the Prouerbs. God would not allow the ſole Monarch of all the whole earth, no not in innocencie, when the Earth brought forth without labour, to eate without paines-taking; he muſt dreſſe the Garden. Food is the reward of labour of ſuch as be able, and it is a bleſſing to eate the labour of our hands. Therefore ſuch are here reprobued, which riſe vp to eate and drinke, and doe eate and drinke to riſe vp and play, or prate, or ſleep, or to runne to playes, to fulfill their luſt; to decke themſelues like wantons, the ſonnes and daughters of *Belial*, of *Iezabel*: ſome be *Cains* race, and eate to be vagabonds, going vp and downe begging: ſome of *Eſaus* race, and eate to hunt and hawke, till they haue ſold their inheritance for a meſſe of pottage, and themſelues be leſſe worth than one meale, which they before beſtowed vpon their dogs; theſe ſhould know that they are borne to labour, and that godly men and women haue ſo beſtowed their time; yea Ieſus Chriſt himſelfe liued in a calling painefully.

Boaz commanded his yong men, ſaying, Let her glean

gleane euen among the sheaves.] What *Ruth* desired, verse the seventh, here *Boaz* alloweth her, when he saw her so well giuen and so painefull. So we see how *the godly diligent hand obtaineth fauour and a blessing*: as appeareth in *Ruth* here; and in *Iacob*, whose paines the Lord rewarded abundantly. This is taught in the Parable of the talent, in which the stocke of the diligent is increased. For God hath thus promised to doe; and labour is a meanes appointed of God to get his blessings, who also openeth the heart of the rich to doe good to the poore which labour painefully. Would we haue supply of our wants? Would we haue earthly blessings? Then must we labour and take paines. Of gathering among the sheaves, see verse the seventh. *Boaz* here is not onely content that shee should gather, by, or besides, but betwene the sheaves, where more plentifull gathering was of eares and scattered corne; it was more then a common fauour, an argument of his speciall loue. The rich are to be mercifull, yet may they extend their bounty, as they shall like, to one more than to another, as they shall thinke fitting. Of which before on verse 7.

And reprocch her not; or as the marginall reading is, *shame her not*. From these words note, I. *Tong men are apt to offer iniurie, and to reprocch the poore women, widdowes, and strangers*; else *Boaz* would not haue giuen them this charge, but that he knew their wanton behauiour by nature, and how the Jewes tooke libertie to vse their speeches against such strangers, especially, perhaps, when they

Prou. 13. 4.
Gen. 31.

Mat. 25.
Prou. 13. 4.

תכלית

they saw her better respected then their owne countrie women. II. That *reproching is to put shame upon one*, therefore is such a word here vsed, as may be translated either way. III. That *goodnesse and mercy stands not onely in doing good, but also in preventing euill*, as much as lyeth in vs: both is here done by Boaz, as is also before noted out of vers. 9.

Vers. 16. *And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leaue them, that she may gleane them, and rebuke her not.*

Boaz speech continued to his seruants, touching his liberality towards Ruth, who thought it not enough to let her gleane among the sheaues (for that he knew she would not filch nor steale out of them,) but he commandeth his seruants, that they should of purpose let fall handfuls for her to gather, and not rebuke her for so doing. So here is Boaz, charge, with the end why, and also a forbidding of them to rebuke her.

And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her.] As they reaped, they cut by handfuls, and thereof made sheaues, of which handfuls they should let some fall, as they were reaping, or else some of them, as they were binding vp the sheaues, which is the more likely. Howsoeuer it was, we may note, I. That *a mercifull man and a godly man is frank-hearted to the godly poore, such as be painefull and deserue loue*. This is euident in Boaz, whose mercifull kindnesse is many wayes
 set

set forth; hee spake to her in a louing appellati-
 on, calling her, Daughter; he admitted her to his
 table, as one of his family; he praised her vertues,
 and prayed for her; he bound his seruants to the
 good behauiour towards her, to preuent iniurie
 which might be offered to her; and hee also did
 giue to her, and that both freely without ask-
 ing, and largely without niggardly sparing. Now
 a good man is moued, as *Boaz* to this, because
 hee conceiueth the miserie of another with a fel-
 low-feeling; hee placeth himselfe in their stead,
 and considereth his own frailtie, the worlds mu-
 tabilitie, and that he may stand in need, if God
 should lay his hand vpon him: lastly, he know-
 eth that God loueth a cheerefull giuer. There-
 fore here let vs in our charitie towards the god-
 ly, imitate this blessed *Boaz*, shew our loue in
 words, in deeds, in doing good, in preventing
 euill euery way; and what wee doe, to doe it
 freely, and bountifully. Many will not giue, as
 being altogether mercilesse: but let them re-
 member the threatning of *Iames*. Many wil giue,
 but not largely, nor freely without importuning,
 though they be able, and their brethren stand in
 need. *I I.* Note, that seruants are not to giue what
 is their Masters, without his warrant: for *Boaz* here
 alloweth them to giue her; and without this
 warrant, it had not been lawfull for them to haue
 thus left her handfulls of corne: for seruants are
 but trusted with, or amongst their Masters
 goods; they are not disposers of them; the dispo-
 sing is at the pleasure of the Owner, and not of
 the

James 2. 13.

Gen. 31. 33.

the seruants, which haue no right in them at all. Those seruants therefore which will take vpon them to giue of their Masters goods, vnder pretence of charity, or what else, are to be reprobued: for it is theft so to doe, without the will of the Owner; and the gift so giuen, vnder what shew soeuer, is not acceptable to God: for men must giue of their owne, and not be liberal vpon other mens estates.

And leaue them that she may glean them.] Here it may be asked, Why did not Boaz rather giue her a quantitie of corne, and so send her home, rather then to let her abide in the fields to glean? Because he would so relieue her, as yet hee would keepe her in labour, and not maintaine her in idlenesse. And this is *the best charitie, so to relieue the poore, as we keepe them in labour.* It benefits the giuer, to haue them labour; it benefits the common-weale, to suffer no Droanes, nor to nourish any in idlenesse; and it benefits the poore themselves, it keepe them in health, it discouers them to bee idle or painefull; if painefull, it procureth them fauour: and lastly, it keepeth them from idlenesse, and so from a sea of wickednesse, which the lazie persons are subiect to, and run into, as the vagrant poore giueth vs sufficiently to know, which dwell among vs, or rather rogue vp and downe without dwelling, or certaine abode. Let therefore men thus relieue the poore with Boaz; and if men would spare from excesse of apparell, daintie fare, idle expences in keeping Hawkes
and

and Hounds, in following vnthriftie gaming, and such like, and lay vp that to charitable vſes, to ſet the poore on worke, what ſingular good might be done! the poore would ceaſe to complaine, and the rich themſelues would be better for it.

And rebuke her not.] This caueat he addeth, that they might not think his command, To let fall handſuls, was for triall of her; but that ſhee ſhould carry away what they ſhould ſo let fall, without check. Before, hee warned them not to reproch her, by giuing her ill language; and here hee will not haue her to ſuffer rebuke at their hands, for taking what he ſhall allow her: for the ſeruant is not to find fault with any perſon, for receiuing his Maſters kindneſſe: he may diſpoſe of his owne, and the ſeruant is not to diſlike with it, in checking the receiuer, in whom there is no cauſe of rebuke, but rather in the euill eye of the ſeruant, as our Sauour ſheweth in the parable of the Vineyard.

Matth. 02. 15.

In Verſ. 17. So ſhe gleaned in the field untill euen, and beat out that ſhe had gleaned; and it was about an Ephah of Barley.

THis ſheweth the continuance of *Ruth* in her labour, till the end of the day: then, her bearing out the corne, and what it by meaſure came vnto: the ſcope to ſet out Gods bleſſing, her painefull trauell, and *Boaz* furtherance thereof, as is noted in the former verſes, by allowing her to

P gleane

glean amongſt the ſheaves, and commanding his ſervants to let fall handfulls for her to gather vp.

So ſhe gleaned in the field untill Even.] Ruth abode in that ſame field, as Boaz adviſed; there ſhe found kindneſſe. It is good abiding there, where we doe well. It is wantonneſſe to bee remouing from thence, and not being in want, as many light ſervants doe, who as rolling ſtones, which can neuer gather moſſe, ſeele want ere they be aware. Ruth kept her ſelfe there where ſhe was well; and ſo ſhould others doe, and reape the fruit of wiſedome and conſtancie: both which appeared in Ruth herein. Note againe from her example of ſedulitie, that ſuch as loue labour, take paines ſo long as they may; all the day till night: for the day is the time of labour till the euening, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh; Man goeth out to his labour untill the Euening. Ruth reſted not till the time of reſt: for they that loue labour, doe ſtrengthen themſelues to it, as Salomon ſpeaketh of the good houſ-wife. And this ſtrengthening is thus; when they labour to come with a good will to worke; when they force their owne conſciences thereto from the Commandement of God to labour; when they doe conſider labour as the ordinarie meanes appointed, both to get an outward eſtate, and to preſerue the ſame: and laſtly, when they ioy in the fruit of their labour, and reape the profit of their hands. Thus ſhould wee ſtrengthen our ſelues to take paines, as Ruth here did. So ſhall

Prou. 31. 17.

Prou. 31. 18.

shall we eate the bread of our owne hands, as the Apostle exhorteth: which, as before I haue noted, is a blessed thing, and we shall not eate the bread of idlenesse, the bread which the good woman would not taste of: it is vsauorie to all that truly feare God, and walke as they should, in an honest calling. This diligence and constant labour of *Ruth*, checketh those which will not worke on the day, to haue the sweet labouring mans rest in the night; not in health, to relieue themselves in sicknesse; not in youth, to maintaine old age; not in summer, for heat; not in winter, for cold: but rather as Droanes desire to liue vpon the sweat of other mens browes, not vpon the labour of their owne hands, as God spake to *Adam*. They also are here reprov'd, which will not be constant in labour, but worke onely by fits to supply present wants, and to haue money to spend, not setting hand to labour while they haue one penny, neuer providing for the time to come, but doe rest vpon their present strength, to labour for supply of present wants, and no farther; whereby it commeth to passe, that in sicknesse and old age they must either bee relieued of others, or perish for hunger.

And beate out that shee had gleaned.] Shee was both the Gleaner and the Thresher. Corne was beat out sometime by oxen, or horses treading, or by a wheele running vpon it, or by a staffe, as here, or by the flaile, as now euery where with vs. It was a meane course to gleane, but a meaner for

1. Thef. 4. 11.

2. Thef. 3. 12.
Psal. 128. 1.
Prou. 31. 27.

Gen. 3.

her selfe to sit downe to beate out what shee had gleaned; & yet this shee did: before shee went home to her mother in law, whose house shee would not cumber, nor trouble her old head with the noyse of the beating, shee would bring home all ready with her. Shee laboured more like a seruant then a daughter in law, and yet she in loue was more then a daughter in law; her seruice was beyond a seruant in labour and trauel, with diligence and faithfulness, and her loue surpassed and exceeded the loue of many naturall children. The thing principally here to be noted is, that *the godly, which indeed be truly humble, and painefull, refuse no honest kind of labour.* Abel will keepe sheepe; *Jacob* will doe the like; *Sarah* will bake cakes, euen ordinary bread, not like the Apothecarie stuffe, such as our Ladies perhaps will put their hands vnto, if their fingers be yet not too fine; *Rebecca* will take a pitcher and fetch water, yea more, will draw for the Camels of a stranger out of courtesie; Yea, *Gideon* will thrash; *Boaz* will lie by his corne heape; *Ruth* will beate out her corne; and the honorable woman will put her hand to the distaffe. The reasons are, because such haue put on humilitie, which will refuse to doe nothing that is honest and lawfull; they know no dishonestie therein, and that it was held a vertue aforesayd to labour in such things, as the pride of our times iudge base & contemptible, and themselues disgraced therein. By no meanes many in our age will labour vpon any occasion in any common thing; they haue (for-
sooth)

sooth) their reasons: They alledge birth. But who better borne then *Gain* and *Abel* the sonnes of the sole Monarch of the whole world? Christ Iesus by birth, as man, descended of Kings, and the King of Iudah, yet was a Carpenter: hee had birth to haue boasted on, and he had power diuine to haue exempted him from labour, yet he would not doe so. King *Alphonſus* doing something with his hands, and labouring so, as some which beheld him found fault, smiled and said, Hath God giuen hands to Kings in vaine? Yea the Grand Segnior by his law, as I take it, is to doe daily some bodily worke with his owne hands, and that law they doe obserue, to grace labour, and that labouring men should not become contemptible. They will alledge, I meane our Gentlemen Idlers, that they haue rich parents to maintaine them, that they need not worke. Yes, if not for maintenance, yet to preuent a world of wickednesse which commeth by their idle life. For who set out the ensignes of pride in apparell, but these? Who proue so prodigal? Who liue so much in filthy lusts of vncleannesse? Who maintain play, and play-houses? Who are the Tabacconists, the drunkards, the ryotous persons? Who of the roaring boyes, and damned crue, but commonly these? Behold, you rich parents, the goodly fruit of the idle education of your children! But graunt they proue not euer such as be here named: may they yet liue without callings, and onely liue idly, and do nothing, because their parents can maintaine

P 3

them?

Mark. 6. 3.

*The great Lord
of the Turkish
Empire.*

See what Da-
uid was when he
yet kept sheep.
1. Sam. 16. 12,
18, 19 and 17.
40, 42.

them? Did rich *Abraham* so bring vp *Isaac*, or he
so *Jacob*; and this man so his children; or did *Iesse*
thus traine vp *Dauid*? If he had, surely he had
neuer beene King of Israel: for God neuer made
choise of any man to aduance him, but such as
were in their callings. God calleth *Moses* keep-
ing sheep; so *Dauid*; and *Gideon* when he was
threshing; and *Elisha* when he was plowing; *A-*
mos when he was with his cattel. What shall I
speake of the Apostles when Christ did call them?
Was not some mending their nets, other fish-
ing, another sitting at the receipt of custome?
none idle or out of a calling. So long as the pro-
digall sonne liued out of a calling, yea till he kept
swine, as base as it was, he neuer came to himselfe,
he neuer had grace to repent. These Idlers and
loose liuers yet say for themselues, that it is a dis-
grace for them to mind so meane things, as the
men of old time did. Disgrace! Who can hold
that to be a disgrace, which better mē haue done?
Better for pietie to God, better before men, for
noblenesse of birth, for greatnesse of stature, and
for name of renoune in the world. Againe, who
doe make that a disgrace now, which God in his
Word sheweth to haue beene their praise? This
conceit of disgrace ariseth from the spirit of
pride and vanitie, in the sonnes of *Belial*. But if
conceit of disgrace make them auoid labour in
some calling, whether of the mind or body; then
would I faine know, why they auoid not those
things wherein disgrace is indeed? and why they
shame not to liue idly, prodigally, lasciuiously,
in

in ryot and excesse, in foolish pride, and vanitie, and lewd courses vnbeseeeming the name of Christianity? Lastly, these vnprofitable members will say, they haue better beene brought vp, than to take paines. What is this better bringing vp? It is to follow fashions, or to drinke and whiffe the Tabacco pipe, or to congie and complement, or to hunt and hawke, and then curse and sweare as the furies of Hell; or else to handle a weapon to strike and stab, and vpon a word to challenge, and so into the field to play the Deuils companion, or to play at dice and cards, or to read amorous bookes, to court a Curtisan, I shoud say a Gentlewoman or a yong Gallant, to vanitie and wantonneffe. How much more commendable were it, and profitable to be employed in some good literature, as in the knowledge of tongues, and arts? And will their bringing vp allow them to liue idly? Was not *Paul* brought vp at the feet of *Garnuliel* a great Statesman among the Iewes, and yet he laboured with his hands, and neuer liued out of a particular calling? And was not *Moses* brought vp in *Pharaoes* Court, and in all the learning of the Egyptians? Yet did he liue in a calling, and would be a Shepherd, rather then liue idly, or in *Pharaoes* Court wickedly: he pleaded nor his birth, his gentrie, his better education, as these doe. It is enough to be a Gentleman, as they speake now adayes, to countenance him in sinne, in sloth, in brauerie, in contempt of a strict life, to liue out of a calling, sauing the calling of a Gentleman, a profession so

abused to aduance sinne and Satans kingdome, as nothing more: yet neuer read I, nor heard I of in holy Writ, or elsewhere, that the title and name of a Gentleman should be a calling, to exempt men from all callings, from all honest labours, and to leaue them loose, as wild Colts without bit or bridle, to their owne lusts and licentious libertie, and finally, to their ruine and destruction. This is not Gentrie, but rather Gentilisme, to be hated of a Christian. The practice whereof was odious euen in the Common-wealths of Heathen men.

Exod. 16. 36.

Exod. 16. 16.

Gen. 32. 13, 14.

Deut. 8. 18.

Psal. 127. 2.
Haggai 1. 6.

And it was about an Ephah of Barley.] Thus much her daies labour came vnto, which was almost a bushell after our measure. An Ephah was tenne times as much as an Omer, which was the measure for gathering Mannah; and this was as much as would serue one man bread for a day. So *Ruth* had gathered so much in one day, as might serue her many dayes: thus the Lord blessed her labour. Whence we may learne this, that *the Lord can and will giue sometime a plentifull blessing to the diligent hand.* Thus he blessed *Iacob* in his painefull seruice so, as hee was able to giue to *Esau* a present of five hundred fiftie head of beasts, and cattell, of one sort and other; for all things are in his hand, and at his disposing. How soone did hee enrich againe *Iob*? It is nothing with the Lord to make a poore man rich. And therefore in our labours let vs haue recourse vnto God, because hee giueth power to get wealth; without his blessing our labour is in vaine; but with his blessing

bleſſing our labour ſhall take good effect.

Iohn 21.6.

Verſ. 18. *And ſhee tooke it vp, and went into the citie; and her mother in law ſaw what ſhee had gleaned; and ſhe brought forth, and gaue to her that ſhee had reſerued, after ſhe was ſufficed.*

Ruthes comfortable returne out of the field, with what, whither, to whom, with her kindneſſe in giuing what ſhee had reſerued at meale-time from Boaz table; ſo as ſhe had a double witneſſe to ſhew her mother his kindneſſe; the Ephraim of barley, and the food of his table: both which did (no doubt) greatly comfort the heart of Naomi, as appeareth by her heartie prayers in the next verſe.

And ſhe tooke it vp, and went into the Citie. Shee beareth the burthen her ſelf. And this is noted, to ſhew how the Lord taketh notice of the burthens of his children; which are of two ſorts, either ſuch as bee voluntarily vndertaken, and willingly for diſcharge of their dutie, as Iacob in his ſeruiſe to Laban, or Ruth here for her honeſt maintenance, or elſe impoſed vpon them, as the burthens of Pharaoh vpon the Iſraelites: on both the Lord looketh, approouing the one, and pitying the other. Which may giue comfort vnto the painefull, in bearing the burthen of their calling, or of oppreſſion; for the Lord knoweth their troubles, their labour and trauell, and will doe them good in the end, if they waite with patience.

Gen. 31.12.
Exod. 3.7.

And her mother in law ſaw what ſhe had gleaned.

ned.] By this it appeareth, that *Ruth* did hide none of her gleanings from *Naomi*, but shewed her all, and this for three causes; to manifest Gods mercy towards her; that she might praise God with her; to shew that she had been painefull in her absence, and not spent her time idly; and to shew her faithfulness, that she kept nothing from her. And thus should children and seruants doe to such as depend vpon their labour, approoue their labour by the fruits thereof, and their faithfulness vnto their Parents and Masters. They may not bee faithlesse as some seruants bee, nor carelesse and idle as be too many children, who vnder their Parents take libertie to be lazy, when yet they haue more reason to bee painefull and carefull then seruants, as nature, better maintenance, and the hope of portions and inheritance binde them.

And she brought forth, and gaue her.] After that *Ruth* had shewed what she had gleaned, she took out some victuals, and gaue to her mother in law also. *Godly children are kind and louing to their Parents.* If this bee in a daughter in law, to a mother in law; much greater is the bond of duty of naturall children to their naturall Parents, if they be truly religious: as may bee seene in *Dauid* to his Parents, and *Ioseph* to his. And good reason is there why they should doe their Parents all good: nature bindes them, also the commandment of God to honour them; which comprehendeth loue, reuerence, obedience, and reliefe; and the example of godly children, yea, of Christ himselfe

See chap. 4.
verf. 15.

1. Sam. 22. 3.
Gen. 45. 11.

Exod. 20.

himself vnto his mother, moueth them. There be also rare examples for this among the Heathen, the rather to perswade Christians hereunto, lest they rise vp in iudgement against them. Let children therefore learne to be kind and mercifull to their poore Parents, and not be like the vnnatural Impes, whereof there bee these sorts, first as care not to prouide for them, but to get all they can from them; they are not willing to do them good, but grudge to relieue them, and are sicke of their liues, wishing their death, to be eased of the burthen. Other there be which will rob their Parents, and steale from them what they can get, yea, and thinke it no sinne, as *Salomon* telleth vs, yet are they the companions of a destroyer. The third sort are those hellish monsters, who rise vp to murder their Parents, but the Lord reuengeth it, as we see in the example of *Abalom*.

That shee had reserved, after shee was sufficed.] It is meet to eate to suffice nature, for the preservation of life, and the better inabling of vs to walke painefully in our calling, of which before in verse 14. Note farther hence, 1. That such as haue true loue, will spare from themselues to relieue others, yea though they themselues be but poore, and haue nothing but from hand to mouth, as we say. Of this we haue here an example, and in the poore widdow, which gaue her two mites; yea our Sauiour, who was relieved by others, yet kept a bag for the poore; he spared of his gifts, to giue vnto others. For true loue cannot but pittie the want of others: and such as so loue, will not hoard

Ioh. 19. 26, 27.

See *Val. Max.*
lib. 5. cap. 9.

Prou. 28. 24.

Luk. 21. 2.

hoard vp for themselves, and let their poore brethren remaine in want, when for the present they haue sufficient; they liue in hope of supply, and doubt not of Gods prouidence for the time to come, when they giue charitably what they may spare for the present. This condemneth the cursed couetousnesse of such as haue laid vp in store for many yeeres, and yet will not bestow any thing vpon such as doe need; and also it checketh such as excuse and exempt themselves wholly and alwayes for giuing any thing, because they be poore. If this plea had stucke in the heart of the poore widdow, which cast her mites into the treasure, shee would haue reserued them to her selfe: but so should shee haue lost her eternall praises. I I. *Such as would thrive, spend not all at once, but reserue somewhat both for themselves and for others.* Ruth ate, shee was sufficed, and reserued some for afterwards, for her mother and her selfe: she was not ryotous & wastfull, because she had more then did suffice for the present. For such as be painfull, know how they come by that which they haue; they also know it to be a vertue to spare and keep, what necessitie causeth not to be layd out, neither charitie, nor pietie to be spent; they know, that what they haue, is so their owne before men, as yet before God they are but Stewards thereof. Therefore from this, and *Ruths* example, we must learne frugality, to vse Gods blessings to doe our selues good; but we must beware of waste, and not let any thing be lost, as our Saviour commanded, when he had fed so many

many thousands. They then here are worthy of iust reprehension, who wastfully consume Gods blessings; some on their bellie, as doe Drunkards and Gluttons; some on their fleshly delights, bringing themselues to a morsell of bread; others vpon play and gaming, idle and prodigall vnthrifts, such as this our nation now is too much burthened with; others vpon too costly and often fantasticke anyre, the ensigne of pride and vanitie; to whom if any speake for their reformation, they reply with words of contempt of others, and carelesse neglect of their owne estate, saying, They spend but their own, what haue any to doe with it? But these must remember, that they must giue an account vnto God, whose blessings they waste; they must also know, that Gods gifts are not giuen them to consume wholly vpon themselues after their lusts, but to be Stewards thereof for God, and in his stead to doe good to others, as need shall require. This prodigality the Lord often punisheth with poutertie, and sometime with imprisonment; yea with shamefull deaths in some, whom God giueth ouer to fall into the hand of the Magistrate for some euill committed and deseruing death.

Luk. 15.

Verse

Verse 19. *And her mother in law said vnto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And shee shewed her mother in law, with whom shee had wrought, and said, The mans name with whom I wrought to day, is Boaz.*

HERE is *Naomi* her question to *Ruth*, with her heartie prayer to God for him that had so mercifully dealt with *Ruth*; and *Ruths* answer to her againe, shewing with whom shee had gleaned, and naming the name, euen *Boaz* her kinsman.

And her mother in law said, Where hast thou gleaned to day, and where wroughtest thou?] When *Ruth* went out in the morning, shee asked leaue of *Naomi* to goe to glean, but whither shee knew not; therefore now being returned with so much corne, and such food, shee asketh *Ruth* where she had beene; not doubting of *Ruths* honest dealing, but in admiration of Gods mercy, and in desire to know who was the instrument of that hand of God vpon her. For *favours bestowed, doe win affections, and cause a longing after the partie to know who he is*, if we know not his person, as here; and also what his name is, and of what kindred, though we looke vpon the man, as *Saul* did; that so we might see the reason thereof, and might shew particularly our loue vnto such a one, praise God, and pray also for him. Now, if this be the force of benefits from man, how much more from

from God, from whom we receiue so many and daily blessings ! These should win our affections to him, & worke in vs a desire to know him, who he is, and why we should receiue such kindnesse, that so we might loue him, praise him, and in all thankfulness yeeld him all obedience. But, alas, vpon whom doe his blessings thus worke ? I wish that his mercies made vs not forget him, and to forsake him, when we haue knowne him. In this that *Naomi* suspecteth not *Ruth*, but rather admireth Gods mercy towards her, wee may also note, that *the godly are not uncharitably suspicious of them that be poore, when they know them to bee godly.* *Naomi* did not thinke of any vniust dealing of *Ruth*, as if shee had stolne this corne; nor that shee had gone a begging to get it; or this other food; for shee asketh where shee had gleaned and wrought; not where shee had stolne and begged ? For Ioue is not suspicious; *it thinketh no ill.* *Naomi* was perswaded that some had bestowed this fauour vpon *Ruth* gleaning and working in the field. This grace of charitie must wee labour for, euen in thinking not amisse of others in getting goods, though much in a small time; so there be not apparent tokens of the ill meanes vsed in getting the same: for God can suddainly enrich a man; as he did *Abraham*, and *Lot*; so *Iacob* in the seruice of *Laban*: For *the blessing of the Lord maketh rich.* Yet if the man be wicked, and hastily is made rich; except an apparent cause be seene, and the meanes also, he may be suspected: for of such *Salomon* speaketh in the Prouerbs,

I. Cor. 13. 5.

Prou. 10. 22.

Pro. 28. 20. and
20. 21.

1. King. 1. 6.

Prouerbs, that they shall not be innocent, and goods so gotten, shall not bee blessed in the end. Some fro hence teach, because *Naomi* asketh *Ruth*, where she had gleaned, and wrought that day? that *Parents* are to take an account of their children, how they spend their time, where they haue beene, and with whom? Indeed this will make children to take more heed to their wayes, it will discouer to parents their nature and conditions the better, and it may preuent many euils through feare to be called to an account for the same. As on the contrary, this neglect in parents giues children the reine, and so they take libertie to sinne, presuming of parents indulgencie, as did *Adoniah*, to whom *Dauid* neuer said, Why hast thou done so? Which made him proud and presumptuous to his owne destruction..

Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee;] to wit, to shew thee this mercy and kindnesse; for hee taketh knowledge of another, who considereth so of him, as his estate and condition requirereth, and thereafter doth him good, as *Baal* did to *Ruth*, when he knew what shee was; as is before noted out of verses 8. and 9. For which here *Naomi* is thankfull, before shee knew the name of the man, and here heartily prayeth for him. Hence teaching, that benefits receiued, prouoke the godly to be thankfull, though they know not the parties, and also to pray for them; as *Naomi* doth here. Which serues to encourage men to doe good to the godly, though their persons be not knowne: they shall not lose with them the fruit of their well-

well-doing; for such will be thankfull, and will pray for them, that God may blesse them. And this teacheth such as receiue fauours, to shew themselues thankfull to them which bestow them. Now thankfulnesse appeareth, First, in acknowledging of benefits received: the contrary is ingratitude, and a note of pride withall. Secondly, in praying for them, as *Naomi* doth here; and *Saint Paul*, for his friends. Thirdly, in requiting the kindneses, as we shall be able, and occasion offered, as *Dauid* to *Barzillai*; the Spies to *Rahab*; *Elisha* to the *Shunamite*; and the great Emperour *Asuerus* to poore *Mordecai*. Which is a reproofe to the ingratefull, such as will not acknowledge a benefit, or lessen it when they confesse it; they that neuer care to requite it, though it be in their power so to doe it, yea and need on the other side require it. Lastly, such as doe requite euill for good. Here we may farther note, that a good heart reioyceth in the well-fare of another. For *Naomi* blesseth God for *Boaz* taking knowledge of *Ruth*, & for doing this kindnes vnto her; so doe the *Macedonians* for the *Corinthians* kindnesse vnto the *Saints* at *Ierusalem*. For such haue louing hearts, & are void of enuie, therefore can they reioyce and blesse God, yea and pray for a blessing vpon those which doe good vnto others: which grace we must strue for.

And she shewed her mother in law, with whom she had wrought, and said, The mans name with whom I wrought to day, is Boaz. As Naomi did demand of her where and with whom shee had beene, so

2. Tim. 1. 16.

1. King. 2. 7.

Ios. 6. 23.

2. King. 4. 13.

Ester 6. 3.

Q

Ruth

Ruth answereth plainly, telling her that the mans name, in whose field she gleaned that day, was *Boaz*: by which *Naomi* perceiued the good hand of Gods providence conducting her into the kinsmans field, whose fauour made her afterwards to counsell *Ruth* to goe into the threshing floore to *Boaz*, as it followeth in the next chapter. *Ruth* calleth *gleaning*, working, as *Naomi* did before: for the diligent hand worketh euen in that, which otherwise may seeme to require no great labour. Shee saith, shee wrought with him, not that he laboured with her, neither that shee did worke for him, as the Phrase in our speech doth intimate, but her meaning is, that shee wrought in his field with his leaue & good liking. In telling his name to her mother in law, it seemeth she learned it in the field; no doubt, she did aske after it, that so shee might speake of his goodnesse vnto her mother in law, when she came home. And we must know, that it is our duety to take speciall notice of such as doe vs good, to know them by name, that so they may be acknowledged, as occasion shall be to meet with them, that they may in particular pray for them, and to giue them their due praises to others. For either to neglect to know them, or easily to forget our Benefactors, is a fault.

Verse 20. And Naomi said vnto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindnesse to the living & to the dead. And Naomi said vnto her, The man is neere of kinne vnto vs, one of our next kinsmen.

THis is *Naomi* her speech againe vnto *Ruth*: wherein shee first earnestly prayeth for *Boaz*, with the reason why shee was so moued thereto, and then sheweth her what he was to them, euen a very neere kinsman.

And Naomi said vnto her daughter in law, &c.] When shee heard who it was, and calling to remembrance what hee was to them, and what mercy he had formerly shewed vnto her husband and children, shee breaketh forth into prayer for him. Whence we may learne, that *new kindneses added to the old, doe the more inflame the affection* to loue and hearty well-wishing, as may appeare heere by *Naomi*: For new fauours call the old to remembrance, and testifieth the continuance of loue. This is an encouragement to such as haue beene kind, still to continue so to the thankfull; the latter fauours shall keep vp the affectiō of loue, and be the remembrancer of what is past, and to bind the parties the more vnto them. Now, if this be so with men, how should we be inflamed in loue towards our good God and Father, who daily reneweth his blessings vpon vs: Ought we not to increase in loue according to his mercies? But oh vngratefull man: What stupiditye

1. Iohn 5. 2.

possesseth thine heart ! Doe we not receiue his blessings with one hand, & shew our vnmindfulnesse of him by the other ? If the keeping of his commandement be the marke of our loue, as it is, then surely our waxing wanton against him, by abusing of his blessings, openly proclaime rather hatred than loue vnto him. This is our vnthankfulnesse, of which we must repent.

Blessed be hee of the Lord.] This is her prayer made to the Lord to blesse him. From this note many things. I. That *Prayer in and by every true member of the Church, hath bene onely made vnto God.* This the examples of all the godly doe confirme, and thus are we commanded to doe, and therefore the prayers made to Sants, Angels, yea, or to the Virgin *Mary*, are abominable, and cursed idolatry. II. That *it is the Lord that doth blesse and make happy*: for what is begged of God, that is acknowledged to be his gift. And what happinesse corporall or spirituall can man attaine vnto, but by the Lord ? Therefore if we want blessings, let vs beg them of him, if wee haue them, acknowledge him the Authour, and be thankfull in cheerefull obedience for the same, as wee be exhorted in the Word of God : For who can think himselfe blessed of God, & not be thankfull and obedient vnto him, but such as be void of all grace ? III. That *the Lord will blesse the mercifull.* For shee prayeth for that which she had warrant to aske : and wee find that the Lord hath so promised to doe. And therefore let the mercifull looke for a blessing, and let vs pray for that blessing

Deut. 10. 12.
Rom. 12. 1.Psal. 41. 1, 3.
Mat. 5. 7.

sing vpon their heads, which shew mercy vnto the poore and needy, that they may be encouraged in such workes of charitie. And to moue them hereto, let them consider Gods promise to them, how they be vnder Gods protection, how others pray for them, when they doe little thinke thereof, and doe blesse them, as *Naomi* doth *Boaz* here; and if the poore faile of their duty, yet the almesdeed ascendeth vp to God, and the worke done shall blesse them, euen the backe and belly of the poore. Let these things moue the rich to doe workes of mercy, and to reioyce therein. IV. That *the poores reward vnto the rich for their workes of charity, is onely their prayer to God for them.* *Naomi* had no other recompence for *Boaz*, but this; and this is a great requirall, when it is a seruente prayer from faith; for such the Lord doth heare, and will himselfe reward their workes, he becomes bound for them, to make good what on their behalfe is wanting. Which may greatly comfort such as be mercifull. And seeing the poore haue nothing else to repay backe, but their prayers; let them not faile in this, not onely when and while the benefit is in receiving, but euen when for time the fauour may seeme to bee forgotten, so often as their Benefactors come to their remembrance, not to faile to lift vp a thought to God for them.

Who hath not left off his kindnesse to the liuing and to the dead.] The reason which moued *Naomi* to pray so seruently for a blessing vpon *Boaz*, was his constant fauour towards them alieue, as before to

Deut. 24. 13.

Ag. 10. 4.

Iob 31. 30.

Feuardentius
in hunc locum.

2 Sam. 9. 1.

Prou. 17. 17.

1 Sam. 22. 4.

2 Sam. 10. 2.

Exod. 10.

her husband and children then dead: and it is as if *Naomi* had said, He continueth still in his former kindnesse to vs that be now aliue, to thee and me, which he shewed to my husband and children now departed this life. The Papists prattle, I know not what, of benefiting the dead by workes of charity, out of this place, by wresting the sense thereof to maintaine their errour: which I leaue as idle and vnprofitable, and come to more sound and profitable instructions for our selues. Hence may we obserue, That true loue in good men, dyes not with the dead, but is shewed to those they leaue behind them, as *Boaz* doth here to *Ruth* and *Naomi* for their husbands sake; so did *David* to *Mephibosheth* for *ionathans* sake: for a true friend loueth at all times. *David* receiued kindnesse of the King of Moab, and being dead, hee sent to comfort his sonne *Hannan*, if it had beene so taken. For a true friend seeth his friend aliue in his children, and posterity. Let vs then, if we loue one truely, not bury our loue with him in his graue, as the manner of the world is now, which is full of counterfeite loue. But let vs imitate our heavenly Father, who loued *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Iacob*, and their seed after them, and promiseth mercy vnto thousands of the posterity of such as loue him, and keepe his commandements. This reproveth such which let their loue die with their friends; also such as loue their friends posterity, if they be rich, but not if they be poore, as *Boaz* doth here: But true friendship maketh no difference of a friend by riches

riches and pouerty : for if this make the difference, the friendship is certainly counterfeit. Thirdly, this condemneth such friends as loue such as remaine of their friends departed so, as vnder colour of kindnesse, they rob their children committed by the will of their dead friend to their custodie; such villanie there is in the world, and falsehood masked vnder the shadow of loue. Besides instruction, here is also matter of cōsolation, if we consider how God raiseth vp constant friends to poore posterities; though this be rare, yet wee haue in this place an example, that God is the same in power and mercy to doe the like still for his children: but be it that men faile to be faithfull in their loue, let vs be comforted in this, that the Lord is faithfull: if he loue *Abraham* his friend, his posterity in Egypt after foure hundred yeeres shall reape benefit thereby; if the Lord chose a *Dauid*, he will for a long time for his sake shew kindnesse to his posterity. Let this, this I say, settle the hearts of carefull parents for their posterity: for if the Lord loue them, hee will not faile them; nor forsake their posterity that shall depend vpon him, hee is the sure and constant friend, and will not leaue off his kindnesse to the liuing and to the dead, as *Naomi* speaketh heere of *Boaz*.

And Naomi said vnto her, The man is neere of kin vnto vs, one of our next kinsmen.] It may seeme by this, that before now Naomi had not told Ruth of Boaz her rich kinsman, but at this present, as occasion had now offered it selfe, now she telleth

Deut. 25.

her that hee was a very neere kinsman, one of her Redeemers, which had a right to redeeme the inheritance, and so to marry her, and to raise vp seed vnto the dead, as the Law required; and this *Naomi* telles her of, to shew how naturall affection did in some sort bind him to this kindnesse which he had shewed her, and also to comfort *Ruth* in this poore estate, in hope of a better condition, as it afterwards fell out. Obserue hence, I. That *the godly wise poore are not vainglorious boasters of their rich friends and kindred.* *Naomi* made not him knowne before this to *Ruth*, both for that shee would not intice *Ruth* to come and embrace her company for any outward respect of worldly friendship, and also because shee knew it to be folly to boast of rich friends, except they were sure to find them good and kind. *Naomi* was not as some poore be, which foolishly brag of rich kinsfolke, while yet they find them not true friends, such as will hardly acknowledge them to be of their kindred, either doe them almost any good at all. II. That *it is then a comfort to the poore to speake of rich kindred, when they shew themselves kind, as kindred ought to doe; for kindred may so be called from kindnesse in them, and by shewing themselves kind to their kinsfolke, as Boaz doth here; and therefore Naomi now, but not before, telleth Ruth of him, what he was to them. The poore may hence learne when fitly to speake of such kinsfolke: and the rich may see how to open the mouthes of their poore friends to speake of them, and to pray for them,*

them, euen by shewing the true tokens of loue and kindred. III. That *neere kinsfolke are to be kind to their poore kindred*: for *Naomi* giueth this as some reason of *Boaz* his so great fauour towards them: and this naturall bond of loue hath both reason and Religion to **strengthen** the same: and therefore such as bee so bound and will not be kind, doe against nature, reason, and Religion: as when parents neglect children; these, their parents; so brethren and sisters one another: and yet this vnnaturall affection is common in these our dayes, which the Apostle condemneth, and also foretelleth it to be a sinne in the last dayes. Lastly, in calling *Boaz* one of the Redeemers, as the word translated *kinsmen* sheweth, it may put vs in mind of this, that *the Lord hath great care ouer the poore*, who appointed by his Law the redemption of lands to the family againe, from which it was sold. And this care hath euer the Lord had, as may appeare by commanding to relieue them, by promising to reward the good done vnto them, by blessing such as haue bene mercifull, and leauing their praises in the Scripture, by publishing their reward at the last day, and by ordaining a Law for the redemption of their estate among the Israelites. The consideration whereof may moue the poore to be thankfull, and rest in God; and the rich to bee good vnto the poore, and herein to imitate the Lord, who so careth for them, as we see.

Rom. 1. 31.
1. Tim. 3. 3.

Leuit. 25. 25.
Deut. 25. 5. 6.

Verse

Verse 21. *And Ruth the Moabitesse said, He said vnto me also, Thou shalt keepe fast by my yong men, untill they haue ended all my haruest.*

RVTH here relateth Boaz further kindnesse, both what, and how long, to gleane in his field after his Reapers, as in the eighth verse, and that vnto the end of haruest.

And Ruth the Moabitesse said, He said vnto me also, Thou shalt keepe fast by my yong men.] When Ruth perceiued the ioy of Naomi for this kindnesse of Boaz, she goeth on to relate further testimonie of his loue, and it is as if shee had said, Boaz did not onely thus with me, as thou my mother hast heard and seene, but which is more, He willed me to continue with his seruants till haruest be ended. Where we see, that *where praises of others are well taken, it maketh the Relater to expresse more fully their goodnesse.* And therefore to encourage men to giue others their due praises, let vs receiue willingly the relation of their vertues and graces. For such is our corruption, that we can attend to ill reports, which makes many so ready to speake ill of others. I wish our eares open in the other respect, but in this I would we were more dull of hearing. Three reasons may be giuen of the relation of this kindnesse to Naomi. One may be this, to set out Boaz praises, and to shew his kindnesse to the full, euen as she found it. If so, then we learne, that *thankfull persons conceale nothing of others kindneses either in word or deed*
that

that may tend to their iust commendations; and thus thankfull should wee be. This thankfulnesse is an excellent vertue commended in Scripture, and practised of the godly, as before is noted: and on the contrary, ingratitude is odious, and causeth vncharitablenesse in giuing, because the poore take not thankfully their almes; in lending also, & that either not at all, for that men be so dishonest, that they will not repay what they owe, or deferre to pay in due time, or not freely, but for gaine, because men would benefit themselves by other mens money, but will not willingly requite it without compact aforehand. And thus we see the euill of ingratitude. The other reason may be, to know her mothers pleasure therein, and how shee liked of it to goe still into *Boaz* fields. If this, then we may learne, that children are to take aduice of their parents in their courses, so seruants of their masters: for, this is to giue them honour, also an acknowledging themselves to be at their disposing, and not their owne men, and it will free them from blame, when things, perhaps, fall out crossely. It is a fault for such to runne on an head, as best pleaseth themselves: this is disorder, and vnrulinesse not sufferable: this is headinesse condemned by the Apostle, and much euill hath come hereby; see it in *Esaú* his marriages; in *Dinab* her wandering; in *Simeon* and *Leui* their cruelty; in *Abimelechs* contentious seruants, and *Lots* seruants; those might haue bred heart-burning betweene *Abimelech* and *Abraham*, as these diuided *Abraham* and *Lot* asunder: heady
and

2.Tim.3.4.

Gen.26.35. &
34.1.
and 21.25, 26.

and vnruely children and seruants may do a great deale of mischief; they are therefore to be aduised, and to follow aduice. The third reason may be, to shew her mother in law, where shee might with good profit continue to gleane, and also of her willingnesse therefore to continue in that labour. If so, then we see that *the fruit of our labour, gaine and commodity, doth spurre on the diligent to continue therein.* Therefore pray for a blessing to be encouraged in paines-taking; and feeling the fruit, continue therein.

Vntill they haue ended all my haruest.] They had a barley and wheat haruest, both here meant, as is plaine in verse the 23. These words *vntill they haue made an end,*] shew some length of his haruest, and his conceit of *Ruths* painfulnesse, that shee would continue to the end, and not giue off after a day or two: they note also his loue and mercy to the poore widdowes. And lastly, they set forth his equitie and true liberality, that graunted her freedome in his owne, and not in other mens fields. What further may be obserued from hence, see before in the eighth verse, where the matter is handled; here onely is the relation of her liberty vnto her mother in law. In all which speech it is worthy the noting, that shee speaketh not a word of *Boaz* great commendations of her owne selfe, verse the 11. Which commendeth to vs in her, *modestie, that is, to passe ouer our owne praises:* which is an example for our imitation, that we might not be condemned of vain-glory, and to bee such as be in loue with themselves,

selues, as those be, which loue to tell of their owne vertues.

Verse 22. *And Naomi said vnto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that thou goe out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in another field.*

Naomi her good counsell, with the reason drawne from perill and danger, if *Ruth* should not follow it.

And Naomi said vnto Ruth her daughter in law.] Here note once for all, that plainly the Writer of this Historie setteth downe this conference, repeating againe and againe *Naomi*, and mother in law, and *Ruth* the Moabiteffe, and daughter in law, which I note to taxe curious eares in these times, who can away neither with speech nor writing, except all be very sententious, brieve, without repetitions, or one word more then they conceit to be needfull. Gods Spirit the authour of euery good gift, be it neuer so excellent, taught not this Pen-man to be so curious, not that he would haue holy things carelesly and rudely set downe, as men censure it, but to humble proud wits, giuen ouer to a light esteeme of holy Writ, not caring to reade therein for the plainnesse of style, that so through their owne pride they might perish, as, alas, many of our high wits doe, who cannot in the hautines of their owne hearts descend to so low a pitch, nor vouchsafe to spend any time in such homely Histories as be in the Scrip-

Albeit what humane eloquence could euer attain to the sublimitie of stile vsed in the Prophetickall Bookes of sacred Scripture, as in Esay, Ieremie, & others?

Scripture, because, as they prophanely iudge, the stile is not stately enough for their carnall hearts. And as this taxeth these proud and prophane persons, so also doth it such as doe despise or carelesly neglect many good mens labours, onely for the plainenesse of the speech, as if all writings were weake, which are voyd of strong lines. These daintie palates can away with nothing but what is finely cookt, because they come not with hunger after good things, but are carried away more with the manner than with the matter, and so more with shadowes, than substances, as in likelihood it would appeare, if they should come to the triall of Religion, and suffering for the name of Christ.

It is good, my daughter, that thou goe out with his maid-m. This is *Naomi* her aduice to *Ruth*. From whence note, I. That Parents are not to be wanting in giuing good counsell to their children; as here a mother in law to *Ruth*; and *Iethro* a father in law to *Moses*; *Dauid* to *Salomon*; and *Eli* to his sonnes: It is their duety so to doe, and the yonger yeeres need it, wanting the experience of the aged. Let parents performe then this duety, shewing their children what is good, what dueties they owe to God and man, and how they should demean themselves well euery way. Contrary to these doe they, which take no care to aduise their children, but doe let them follow their owne swinge. Such also as counsell for the body, as the Heathen may doe; but not for the soule, as Christians should doe. Thirdly, those wicked
parents

Exod. 18.
1. King. 2.
1. Sam. 3. 23,
24, 25.

Ephe. 6. 4.
Deut. 6. 7.

parents which counsell their children not to doe well, but to doe ill, to lie, sweare, steale, as many poore doe; or to dice, card, drinke, or to doe worse, as men desiring to be counted of another ranke, wickedly teach their children by their lewd examples, to their shame, and their childrens ruine, the infecting of the Cōmon-wealth, and the destruction of their house many times. Whereas such parents as doe aduise well their children, do discharge their duty towards God, and their countrey, and acquite their soules from the blood of their children. I I. That it is good for women going abroad, to associate themselves to those of their owne sexe: For they are subiect to be tempted, to be deceiued, and abused, being weake in temptation, and easily ouercome. Let women learne here of *Naomi* her aduise to *Ruth*, and follow it; let them beware of being alone as *Dinah*, or in suspected places with lewd women, or in light and wanton company. It is no good signe of a maidens chastitie, to seek to be in mens company, as many doe, till shame come vpon them.

That they meet thee not in another field:] meaning some lewd and lustfull men, whom *Naomi* will not so much as make mention of: though *Ruth* named in verse 2 I. yong men, yet her mother in law will not name them; shee auoids the mentioning of men to her, as teaching her, and so all others, that women should auoid in their private conferences, unnecessary talke of men. Note moreover, that it is wisdom to prevent dangers; and not expose our selues into perill, when we may auoid it.

Naomi

Titus 2.3,4.

Num. 14.42,
43.

Mat. 4. 7.
Deut. 6. 16.
Psal. 91. 11.
Num. 14. 42,
45.
2. Chron. 35.
22, 23.

Prou. 22. 3.

1. King. 6.

Naomi knew the danger of those times, and how wickedly many were bent, and ready to abuse a poore yong woman, and a stranger, and therefore shee teacheth *Ruth* to be wise to preuent the same: for if we vnneccessarily cast our selues into danger, we doe tempt God, which we may not doe: It is not our way: and therefore we haue no promise of protection, and God hath punished his owne people for so doing, as we may see in the Israelites, and in good *lasias*, who escaped not correction. And therefore let vs learne to be wise to preuent dangers, and not carelessly expose our selues thereinto. Nature teacheth this to beasts, much more reason should perswade man vnto it, and Religion alloweth it, and commendeth that prudent man, that seeth the euill, and auoids it, when they haue no iust cause to the contrary; I meane the euils of trouble, crosses, and such like: for the euill of sin is euer to be auoided, of which it may be *Salomon* doth speake, yet is it wisdom to auoid vnneccessary crosses, and troubles of this life, and such dangers as may procure our hurt, as *Icheram* did by the aduice of *Elisha*, discovering the armies of the Syrians vnto him, that he might not be indangered by them. If here any object the certaine danger that *Micaiah* willingly did runne into, when he went to prophesie before *Achab* who hated him, and such like: I answer, that men cast themselves into danger two wayes, first, by the vertue of their calling, either ordinary, or extraordinary; as did *Micaiah*, which men may not forsake for any trouble or danger

danger whatfoeuer. The other is without a calling; such foole-hardinesse hath no assurance of a blessing; if they escape the perill, it is Gods great mercy, and not their deseruing, and if trouble come vpon them, they can haue no comfort in it, but must take it as a Rod of correction, to teach them to be more wise afterwards.

Verse 23. So shee kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to gleane, vnto the end of Barley haruest and of Wheat haruest, and dwelt with her mother in law.

THe obedience of *Ruth*, in following *Naomi* her aduice, and her constant loue vnto her, in not departing from her.

So shee kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to gleane. Concerning *Ruth* here we may learne, that Children are to take the good counsell of their parents, and to follow the same: as *Ruth* doth here, and as did *Iacob*, yea *Moses* the aduice of *Iethro*. It is the note of a wise child, and a childs duety, if the counsell be wholesome and good. And it is a reproofe to rebellious children, which will not learne nor obey, like the sonnes of *Eli*, and of *Samuel*: but they paid for it, as euer such shall doe.

Vnto the end of Barley haruest and of Wheat haruest. All this time *Ruth* applied her selfe for profit, as being the time of gathering food for winter: she plaid the Ant, and not the Grasshopper: For it is good thrift, not to slack the time of our profit, which God in mercy affordeth to vs: this may we learne of the Ant, to which the Lord sendeth the

R

Sluggard: |

Prou. 13. 1. and
1. 8. 9. & 23. 32.

Prou. 6. 8.

Prou. 27. 24.

Mat. 6. 33. 34.

Verse 30.

Verse 33.

Sluggard: for riches are not for euer, nor the like time to get them, and therefore must we take the season offered, especially in haruest which calleth forth euery one to take paines, to gather in Gods blessings for their life and maintenance. Perhaps some will say, That Christ willeth vs not to take care. But doth he will euer any man not to labour? The care which Christ speaketh of, is immoderate care, care without faith, or care full of doubting, and little faith, and that which is without care of Religion, the minde being taken vp wholly with the world; else men may, yea and ought to labour for the things of this life, to be prouident for the time to come, and frugall in expences for the time present.

And [she dwelt with her mother in law.] That is, all that time of haruest & after. This is noted, to shew Ruths loue and constant affection towards Naomi, that no fauour abroad or gaine reaped by the labour of her hands, could make her forsake her mother in law. Hence riseth a good lesson, that *childrens fauour abroad and good gettings should not draw them from their poore parents, so long as they stand in need of their helpe.* For how can children euer shew themselves thankfull better than in such a case, where what they get, they can willingly bestowe it vpon their poore parents, so maintaining them, who were the authours of their being, and instruments of God for their education? But, alas, the case is otherwise now. This Ruth the Moabitesse a heathen by birth, may rise vp in iudgement against such as should be naturall children,

children, who hauing gotten from vnder their Parents, when they see they can liue of themselves, they make no reckoning of them, being altogether vnwilling to liue with them, and most of all to relieue them.

CHAP. III.

IN this Chapter is *Naomi* her care, to provide a match for *Ruth*, to requite her labour and loue towards her : wherein may be obserued her aduice, the execution thereof, and the good euent of the same.

Verse 1. *Then Naomi, her mother in law, said vnto her, My daughter, shall I not seeke rest for thee, that it may be well with thee ?*

THis is *Naomi* her resolution to provide a marriage for her daughter in law : it is propounded with an interrogation, to shew her full determination. Here note who resolueth, for whom, and what it is, and the end why.

Then Naomi, her mother in law, said vnto her, My daughter.] Here *Naomi* deuifeth how to requite *Ruth* her loue and labour, which is by resolving to get a match for her; and this she doth, as a mother doth for her daughter, after that *Ruth* had so laboured, and now was at rest with her in the house. Of the terme *daughter* before, and also of thankfulnessse, how good turnes should be requi-

ted, (which here is *Naomies* purpose) I haue spoken at large.

1. Cor. 7. 36.
Gen. 2. & 24.
& 28.

Iudg. 14. 1, 2.

Shall I not seeke?] As if she had said; Know it, my daughter, that I am resolu'd to seeke rest for thee. *It is the Parents dutie to provide matches for their children.* So did God the generall Father, for his sonne *Adam*, *Abraham* for *Isaac*, and *Isaac* for *Jacob*; for children want iudgement to make their choise, and are led more by fond affection, or by strength of lust, which is worse, then by reason and good discretion; but yeeld they were wise in their choise, yet are they not so to doe it without consent of Parents, but should doe as *Samson* did, who intreated his father and mother to get him for a wife, the maid which he liked. Let therefore Parents haue a care of this dutie, and betimes provide for their children, as they shall see iust cause, and so make choise, as one may be a mutuall helpe to another; for this end let them obserue their natures, like somewhat in yeeres, in conditions, and body in some sort, that one may bee pleased with the other: then know their religion and vertues, that they may bee of one heart towards God; so shall they loue one another much better, pray for one another, and haue a fellow-feeling in euery condition; yea, this will sweeten their estate vnto them. When they haue noted well these two, if with good natures and graces they can procure goods, it shall not bee amisse to helpe to beare the burthen of marriage. Such Parents are here to bee reproofed, which neglect this dutie, either of carelesse,

nesse, wanting true loue; or of wicked couetousnesse, for that they are not willing to spare any thing from themselves, though yet they haue sufficient.

Rest for thee? So shee calleth the married estate. The word is, a place of rest to settle in: *Marriage estate is an estate of rest*: so heere called, and in chap. 1.9. in respect of the mind of all such as desire marriage, and haue not the gift of continencie, they are restlesse. It is called therefore *portum iuuentutis*, because youth are tossed by lustfull thoughts, as the ship with the waves of the Sea, till they be married. *Mulier* (saith one) *nulla est requies, donec nupsrit*; It may also be called rest, for the contentment and delight which one ought to haue in the other, and in the blessing of posteritie, by the mercy of God. Seeing it is so called, let the married parties labor to make it an estate of rest and peace: and the meanes bee these: First, to loue one another intirely: to worke this, see the good things in one another, and couer the euill, and winke at defects, and bee as blind that way after marriage, as they bee before. Secondly, to performe duties of loue one to another chearefully: so they haue promised, so God commands them, and so the mutuall good of both requireth it, and true loue will doe it. Thirdly, to beare one anothers infirmities patiently, for they bee one; else this will make them two, if they cannot beare with one another, and forbear too, to keepe peace. Fourthly, to take their outward estate of God thankfully, and liue

map of m3
placide quiescit.

in this respect contentedly; let them not thinke how better they might haue bin; for such discontented thoughts breed but sorrowes, and help nothing at all to quietnesse, but rather to encrease discord. Fifthly, to pray daily one for another, and that feruently, that God would remoue the hinderances of loue, or giue wisdom & patience to beare the same. Sixthly, and lastly, in euery discontentment to lay the fault rather vpon our selfe, then to cast it vpon the other; let the husband thinke rather the cause to bee in himselfe, then in his wife; so the wife is rather to blame her selfe, then her husband. If thus the married would doe, faults would be soone amended, and iarres preuented: and the failing in these things, is the cause that marriage is not the estate of rest, but a miserable restless condition, and that through their owne sinnes and corruptions.

That it may be well with thee.] Marriage is for the well-being of such as enter into that holy estate. The husband is for a guide to the woman, and the woman is ordained for a meet helpe for the man. And therefore this is for confutation of those, which simply preferre single life before marriage; nay, doth not God say, It is not good for man to be alone? Marriage is called an honorable estate, and is commended farre before the other life in Scripture. It maketh two one, it is the holy meanes of a lawfull posteritie, and it is the estate in which the most holiest haue liued, and in which Christ himselfe would bee borne, though conceived by the holy Ghost, and borne of

Gen. 2. 18.

of his Mother a Virgin. Saint *Paul* indeed commendeth single life; but not simply, but with respect vnto the then present times, full of troubles and persecutions. If Marriage bee then for well-being, let Parents take care to prouide for their children matches, fit and commodious for Religion, for conditions and meanes of maintenance, for so shall it be well with them. And let such as be married, so make a right vse of marriage, that it may be for their well-being, and the bettring of themselues; which stands in three things: First, in the mutuall societie and neere fellowship of one another; for two are better then one. Secondly, in preuenting thereby incontinencie, and the sinfull lusts of the flesh. Thirdly, in begetting an holy posteritie, training them vp in the instruction and information of the Lord, in whom their Parents doe liue, after they be dead.

Verse 2. *And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshing floore.*

N *Naomi* propoundeth to *Ruth*, the party whom she desireth to match her with; giuing a reason, and shewing the opportunitie of time and place where to breake the matter vnto him.

As *Naomi* affected to doe *Ruth* good, so shee deuised the meanes; for, *A true friend is not in shew onely, or in wel-wishes, but in deuising how to bring to passe what they desire, and to effect what truly they doe affect.* *Jonathan* wished well to *David*, and

Gen. 14.

he deuised meanes for his safetie. *Abraham* wished well to *Lot*, and therefore endeauoured to doe him good, and to recouer him, when he was led away captiue. Where we then wish well, let vs shew it, in counsell, in helpe, in countenance, and not be as such, which will not aduise their friends of their owne accord, nor helpe them in aduersitie, hardly countenance them, when any of note frowne vpon them. Some are friends like *Peter*, in the time of his weakenesse, who followed his Master in trouble as farre off. Some like *Pauls* friends, who forsooke him wholly in perill. Some like *Iehosaphat*, who can speake well a word or two for a *Michaiah*, but not stand out for him, when he is sent by *Achab* to prison most vniustly. Many friends there be, but yet few friends indeed.

And now is not Boaz of our kindred?] How a kin to them, see chap. 1. 1. and 2. 1. This kindred she nameth, because of the Law in Deut. 25. 5, 6. of which afterwards in chap. 4. Here wee doe see what ground she had to seek this match for *Ruth*, euen the Law of God, as shee thought. Her ground in thus making choise was from God, and therefore there was more hope to speed, though in mans reason most vnlkely. Note, that Godly Parents seeke to match their children where God alloweth. *Abraham* will not match with the *Canaanites*, but sends into his owne countrie, and thither *Isaac* and *Rebecca* send *Iacob*; for as in other things, so in this they set God before them, looking to his liking and approbation, that they may expect his blessing. Therefore let such as intend

Gen. 24.

tend to marry, marrie in the Lord, haue his consent, and pray for his presence at the marriage-making, at which he will be, if it be after his will; that is, when parties marry lawfully, and in the feare of his Name. Other marriages he will not countenance, as these; first, such as bee made within degrees forbidden, though allowed by the vsurped authoritie of the Popes forged Vicarship. Secondly, with Infidels, as did the Iewes, and into which sinne fell *Salomon*. Thirdly, with Idolaters, though they professe the true God, and yet worship Idols, as did *Achab*; and therefore *Iehosaphat* his marrying of *Iehoram* his sonne with *Athaliah*, was vnlawfull, and punished heauily by God: such is the marriage of a Protestant with a Papist. Fourthly, with wretched worldlings, and such as be without Religion in truth and sinceritie; for if we haue not ordinary familiaritie with the wicked, with such as bee fornicators, couetous, extortioners, railers, drunkards, inordinate liuers, idle without callings, and disobedient to the Word, blasphemers, vngodly, despisers of those that be good, louers of pleasures more then louers of God, and such like; if, I say, wee may not keepe familiar company with such, then certainly wee may not marry with them; their birth, wealth, and conceited hope to win them, cannot make way for such marriages to them which feare God, and loue their owne soules. Fifthly, with such as bee vniustly diuorced: for that is to marry another mans wife, and to commit adultery. These marriages are made after the flesh, where

1. Cor. 7. 36.

Neh. 13. 25, 26.

1. King. 11. 1.

1. Cor. 5. 10, 11.

1. Cor. 5. 11.

2. Thes. 3. 6, 14.

2. Tim. 3. 2.

where the diuell danceth, but God is displeased, and good Angels, and good men offended.

With whose maidens thou wast.] These words are added, to shew what *Boaz* she meant, and also to giue *Ruth* some hope of good successe. For *Ruth* might obiekt three things, which *Naomi* in this verſe preuenteth. She might haue ſaid: Alas, I am poore, what hope of one ſo rich? To which *Naomi* answereth, He is thy Kinsman, and therefore by law bound to marry with thee; though herein she did ſomewhat erre. Againe, if *Ruth* had ſaid, I am not knowne well to him, and I feare his diſlike: *Naomi* here putteth her in mind with whom ſhee had been, euen with *Boaz*, who had taken notice of her, and had been kind to her, and had ſpoken well of her; yea, in this ſhe calleth a particular kindneſſe of *Boaz* to her remembrance, who willed her to abide with his maidens. Thirdly, if *Ruth* had obiekted the want of opportunitie and fit occaſion to ſpeake to him; *Behold* (ſaith *Naomi*) *hee winnoweth this night barley in the threshing-floore.* So then note, *That warrant from God, experience of the loue of man, and fit occaſion to effect a matter, are ſtrong inducements to attempt the ſame.* Theſe made *Eſter* to aduenture to goe vnto *Ahaſuerus*, her calling from God, her experience of former fauour, and the preſent cauſe requiring, and occaſion offered to make triall. And where theſe concur, let vs boldly doe our indeuour, with hope to effect what wee goe about.

Behold.] That is, See and conſider the providence

uidence of God, it is as one would wish, it falleth out opportunely, as if God had decreed to bring it to passe: so *Naomi* obserued Gods prouidence plainely: for it appeareth manifestly, where and when hee decreeth to bring things to passe, so as we may say, Behold, the hand of the Lord! And this either for good, as in preuenting *Mordecaies* destruction, the Widow of *Sarepta* her famishment, *Dauid* from the hand of *Saul*, *Moses* from drowning, and *Ioseph* from perishing in the pit: or for euill, to bring iudgement vpon the wicked; as vpon *Iezabel* and *Iehoram*, as God had threatned, catching them as it were in a trap, the one in the portion of *Naboth*, and the other in *Iezreel*. For the Lord seeth all things, and his eyes are vpon the wayes of men, to bring his decree to passe by his power and prouidence.

Let vs then cast our eyes about vs, and obserue Gods prouidence: for so shall wee see both his mercy and iustice to praise him; it will make vs patient and contented vnder euery crosse, and carefully to relye vpon him, when we see how his prouidence waiteth vpon his promise, good will and pleasure. Yea, this will comfort vs, and make vs not to feare what man can doe vnto vs, seeing his hand is ready to helpe.

Hee winnoweth barley to night in the threshing floore.] For the threshing floores in those times, it seemeth, from the first of *Samuel*, chap. 23. and other places, that they were abroad in the fields, as the wine-presses were: and this place sheweth, that *Ruth* went out of the citie thither. In such a place

Ester 6.1,3.

1. King. 17. 10,

11, 12, 13, 14.

1. Sam. 23. 27.

Exod. 2. 5.

Gen. 37. 24, 28.

2. King. 9. 15,

21, 25, 30, 36.

Iob 28. 24.

& 35. 21.

Iudg. 6. 37.

Gen. 50. 10.

Numb. 18. 30.

2. Sam. 6. 6.

and 24. 16.

1. Chro. 21. 24.

2. Chron. 3. 1.

Gen. 3. 8.

Sueton.

Irish. Chron.

place, *David* built an Altar to the Lord in the threshing floore of *Ornan*. Of the manner how it was made, is not expressed in the Scripture. It may also seeme, that the winnowing was towards the euening in those hot countries, when the wind did arise, called, *The wind of the day*; or as in Genesis it is translated, *the coole of the day*. *Boaz*, though he winnowed not himselfe in person, yet he may be so said to doe, in commanding his seruants, hee there being a diligent ouer-seer, and a helper forward of the worke with his presence. Howsoeuer, this may we learne, that *It is no vnseemlineesse for men of birth, of place and wealth, sometime to follow in their owne persons meane labours of their calling*: as hee doth here winnowing of corne, *Gideon* his threshing, *Judah* his sheep-shearing, *Elisha* his plough. This they did not of base niggardlineesse, as loth to keepe seruants to doe it, but to exercise themselues in labour, which is healthfull, to preuent idleneesse and ill fruits thereof, to be an example to others, as was *Iulius Caesar*, who would goe bare-headed, and on foote, both in hot Sun-shine, and in foule weather often before his Souldiers; and as the Lord *Lacie*, chiefe Iustice in Ireland, who tooke vp stones to beare them to the building hee had in hand, to prouoke the lazie Irish to take paines. Which proueth those which doe condemne them that so take paines, being persons of worth, as if it were discredit to them, and to bee basely accounted of for so doing; when yet wee see out of the Scripture, men (as these proud fellows hold them) of meane

meane callings, chosen to high places; as *Moses* from keeping sheep, to be Ruler of Gods people; so *Dauid* to be King; *Gideon* from threshing, to be Captaine ouer the hoast of Israel; *Elijha* from the plough, to be the Lords Prophet; so *Amos* from the herd; *Peter* from a poore fisher-mans estate, to be an Apostle; and the like we find in heathen historie of one *L. Q. Cincinnatus*, who was fetched from the plow, to be made Dictator in Rome, and after returned to husbandry againe. Thus we see how great men did set themselues to callings, (now held base and meane by proud and riotous spirits) and also many highly aduanced from meane places and low estate of life, for their worthinesse and vertuous industry for which they were honoured, how meane soeuer by birth or education: such were these Emperours, *Rexinax* an Artificers sonne; *Dioclesian* a Scriueners sonne, *Valentian* the sonne of a Shoomaker, and of a Gardiner came *Probus*. Let our lazie and lewd Roysters, vpstart Gentrie, or such as come of worthy Ancestours, yet hauing no worthinesse in themselues, behold these, and learne to doe as *Maximinius Senior* did, who when he was Generall, did take such paines in meane matters, as others found fault with him. But he answered them, The greater I am, the greater paines will I take. If our Yongsters would thinke hereof, they would not scorne to take paines as they doe, and yet scorne not to liue in a more base course, vnworthy their Gentilitie of which they so much stand, and most vnworthy their Christianity;

which

*Eutrop. Val.
Max.*

*Quò maior fue-
ro, tantò plus
laborabo.*

Gen. 3. 19.

which they too little regard. Whatsoever mens birth and estate be, yet ought they to labour in a calling, because God so commandeth, to avoid idlenesse, to preuent much euill, which cometh from idlenesse, to liue not as Caterpillers, but as profitable members in the Common-wealth, to be an example of wel-doing to others, and to be the better able to maintaine their estate and place, both to themselues and to their succeeding posterity also.

Verse 3. *Wash thy selfe therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiments vpon thee, and get thee downe to the floore: but make not thy selfe knowne to the man, untill he shall haue done eating and drinking.*

Nomi her counsell to her daughter in law, *Ruth*, shewing whither shee should goe, what to doe before, in preparing to goe thither, and how warily she should carry her selfe, for being knowne till after supper.

Wash thy selfe therefore;] That is, because I would haue thee to goe to him, make thy selfe ready, and first wash thy selfe. *Washing is double*, first inward, which the Apostle exhorteth vnto, and this is it *Dauid* prayed for, and without which none can enter into the Kingdome of God; with this washing are we to approach nigh vnto God, as *Ruth* by her washing went vnto *Boaz*. The second is outward, and this is three fold: First, typicall vnder the Law, commanded to the Priests and people, when they drew neere to God,

2. Cor. 7. 3.
Titus 3. 5.
Psal. 51.

Ioh. 3.

Exo. 40. 31, 32.
and 19. 10.
Titus 3. 5.

God, which was a type of sanctification and holiness. Secondly, superstitious, as that of the Jewes taken vp of themselves, & condemned by Christ. Thirdly, ciuill cleanliness, the washing of the body from all bodily vncleanness, and this is here meant, and here commended vnto vs. This outward ciuill cleanness is praise worthy. And this washing was vsed among the Jewes, and among the Heathen; *Eusebius* speaketh of *Iohns* bathing himself. To be cleanly, is healthfull to vs, delightfull to others, and commendable. God required of his people cleanness. Our Christian profession is pure and holy, which outward cleanness well befitte, and seeing it is of good report, we are to obserue it. This reproveth two sorts: the first are such as be sluttish, nasty, and beast-like persons, who hereby shew themselves careless of their credit, slothfull, or couetous, they be offensive, vnciuill, and vnwholesome. The other sort are they which will be cleanly, but yet spend too much time in trimming, washing, and starching, and are so curiously neate, and so careful to be fine and fare outwardly, as they spend their daies almost in doing nothing else; and so liue a proud idle life, like the haughty Dames of Israel, in their brauery, walking with stretched forth necks, with wanton eyes, with tinkling feet, walking and mincing as they goe, wanting humility, and often modesty in gesture, countenance, and gate: but let them reade and remember what the Prophet *Esay* threatneth against such lasciuious wantons and luxurious minions,

in

Psal. 26. 6.

Mat. 15. 2.

Mar. 7. 3, 4.

2. Sam. 11. 3.

and 12. 30.

Exod. 2. 19.

Euseb. hist. eccles.

Deut. 23. 13.

Phil. 4. 8.

Read *Calu.* on

Deut. 23. 13.

in the end of his third Chapter.

And anoynt thee.] Anointing had a religious vse, as we may see in Exod. 40. Leuit. 7. Num. 7. 1. 1. Sam. 9. 16. which did type out the graces of Gods Spirit, Ezek. 16. 9. 1. Iohn 2. 27. This is the best anoynting, and to be laboured for. It had also a common vse, as here, so in 2. Sam. 12. 20. it was usuall, Mat. 6. 17. for Gods blessings may be vsed not onely for meere necessity, but also for outward comelinesse and moderate delight. The Creatures of God may be vsed not onely for preservation of bodily life, but for beautifying of the body, and the better setting forth thereof, as it is in truth, and not counterfeited. Thus wine is giuen to glad the heart, and oyle to make the face to shine. And therefore may Christians lawfully vse Gods creatures for outward comelines, and to preserue that outward seemliness which is Gods owne worke in vs, by washing, and by anoynting. But here beware of excesse, that it be also seasonable, that it be to a good end; beware of pride, of wantonnesse, and learne to know the time of humiliation.

Quest. Here it may be questioned, Whether it be lawfull to paint the face, for it is but and oyle?

Ans. Surely no. First, because this is not to preserue thy naturall beautie, by oyle to make it shine, but to make a counterfeit face: which is deceit and hypocrisie, which God hateth. We must lay aside all manner of hypocrisie; and this is one of them. Secondly, this is vanitie of vanities: for if beautie be vanitie, then much more the filthy counterfeit

Psal. 104. 15.

1. Pet. 2. 1.

Prou. 31. 30.

counterfeit of it. It is great folly: for such spoyle their naturall comlinesse at length, as experience telleth, and the Prophet *Ieremie* speaketh of rending the face with painting. Thirdly, this is great pride; for they dislike the Lords workmanship, and adulterate it, and would be held fairer then God euer made them, and doe proudly glory before men, of a counterfeit visage. Fourthly, it is not held a matter of good report and honesty, which godly persons should follow after: but of dishonesty, such being iudged to be light and lewd; in the Scripture it is the marke of a whore; and a whorish woman is described, *Ierem.* 4. 30. *Ezech.* 23. 40. and an vngodly woman so practised it; euen that Harlot and murtheresse *Iezabel* painted her selfe: and we find by experience such to be wantons and lewdly giuen. Fifthly, the godly and learned Fathers haue vtterly condemned it. ^a Saint *Cyprian* saith, It is the worke of the Deuil: and they offer wrong to God, in despising his worke, and framing another of their owne. ^b *Tertullian* calleth it the Devils businesse, vnworthy a Christian. ^c Saint *Ierome* saith, that it is the fire of youth, the fuell of lust, and the signe of an vnchast mind. ^d Saint *Ambrose* saith, They which muse or set their minds vpon the adulterie of the countenance, doe so also vpon the adulterating of chastity. So as these godly men thinke of them but as of whores, the Devils seruants, betrayers of chastitie, and vnworthy to be accounted Christians. Let such therefore as neuer vsed it, beware of it, and such as haue, repent, and such as doe,

S

abandon

Ier. 4. 30.*Phil.* 4. 8.2. *King.* 9. 30.

^a De habitu virgin. Est opus diaboli, & manus inferunt Deo, &c.

^b De cultu scem. Negotium diaboli, indignum Christiano.

^c Genus inuentus, fomentum libidinis, & impudica mentis iudicium: *Epist.* ad *Marcel.*

^d De adulterio vultus meditatur adulterium castitatis, &c.

abandon and forsake it: for as verball lying is forbidden, so actuall also; such cannot looke vpon God as his Creatures, but as counterfeits, and such as be of the Deuils making; they see not their owne naturall face in a glasse, but the counterfeit of another, one perhaps damned in hell for whoredome alrea dy. Such as haue vsed this finfull practise, and haue turned to God, haue repented of this, as of an accursed worke of the flesh, and as proceeding from Satans instigation. Lastly, no modest Matron euer vsed it, but chaste hearts haue alwayes detested it, and therefore is it carefully to be auoided.

And put thy raiment vpon thee;] That is, thy best apparell, or such as thou hast put vpon thee handsomely. Concerning apparell I will speake somewhat at large. In innocencie there was no need of rayment: *Adam* and *Eue* in that estate liued naked, and were not ashamed, neither was there cause, for that they had not sinned; but after the fall, it was of necessity to put on apparell, to couer our nakednesse, for preseruacion of our bodies, and to defend them from extreme cold, heate, and from hurts which they are subiect vnto in going naked. So then, now we should haue care for rayment, for our selues, for such as depend vpon vs, and for the poore, as *Iob* had. Touching this necessity of wearing apparell, it is agreed vpon on all hands, nature teacheth it, and need inforceth it, and herein to haue not onely one sute, but change also for shift, if we be able; for it is lawfull to haue change of rayment, yea to
weare

Prou. 31. 22.

Iob 31. 19.

weare costly apparell, so it be comely. Of which I will speake in order. We may haue change of rayment, there is a necessity in it, a cleanness also, and *Ioseph* in loue gaue to *Beniamin* five changes of rayment, for him to weare. If any object our Sauour his forbidding two coats: We must know, it was no absolute forbidding: for there he also forbids prouiding of money for their iourney, and other things else. But this was to shew, that they were to make speed, and also to teach them to depend vpon his prouidence; for he vndertooke to prouide for them in this iourney. And by this experience of Christs mercy towards them, he would teach them how to trust in God, when hee was to send them abroad into all the world after his Ascension. And therefore the begging Fryers haue hence no ground for their idle life, and for their hauing but one coate. True it is, that to haue changes of rayment, and to see our brother naked, hauing no cloathes to put on, and yet we not supply his want, were an vnmercifulnesse, if so by our neglect of him, he should perish: otherwise we may weare change of rayment, yea & put on costly also, with changeable colours, & ornaments vpon. *Salomon* wore costly attyre: so his wife, *Ioseph*, *Mordecai*, and *Esau* in *Isaacs* house: they wore also garments of diuers colours: so did *Ioseph* in *Iacobs* house, and *Tamar* *Dauids* daughter; and *Mordecai* was clad in white, blue, and purple. And as for ornaments, as eareings, bracelets, chaines, rings, Iewels of gold and siluer, the Lord allowed

Gen. 45. 22.

Mat. 10. 10.

Psal. 45.

Gen. 41. 42.

Ester 8. 15.

Gen. 27. 29.

Gen. 37. 7.

2. Sam. 13. 18.

Ester 8.

Exod. 31. 2.
Gen. 24. 22, 23.

Vide Rich. de
posueta, lib. 1.
cap. 10.

1. Tim. 2. 9.

them to his people, & to weare them vpon them; and so did *Rebecca* weare such, sent by *Abraham* for *Isaacs* wife: they be made for mans vse; and therefore the godly vsing the, and God allowing them, wee may vse now our Christian liberty therein. But here wee must obserue decencie, which is a comelines befitting the person of euery one. And here must be considered, first, age, young or old: for the same color & fashion besit not both alike. Secondly, the sex, man and woman; for these must be distinguished, as God ordained in *Moses* Law: nature it selfe, reason, and lawes of well gouerned Common-weales doe so ordaine also. Thirdly, the profession and calling of persons, and the difference in place; for some be publike, some bee priuate, which must bee looked vnto. It is therefore reproveable for publike persons out of basenesse, not to goe as their place requireth; and for priuate persons to goe beyond their calling, and their condition of life, although it bee not about their habilitie; for this breedeth confusion and discord: when such also as by profession should be graue, as Scholers, and Ministers, yet doe goe Ruffian like, it is worthy of reproofe, and punishment also. Fourthly, the manner of wearing must be obserued; it must bee comely, with shamefastnesse and modestie, both in men and women; we must so weare our apparell, as grace and vertue, and not corruption of heart and vice should appeare to bee in vs. The vertues which must appeare in vs by our attire, are these: First, is *modestie*; for raiment was to couer our shame, and therefore

therefore that whorish fashion of going with naked breasts, and so low vncouered, as some doe, is to be abhorred of modest women, and chaste virgins. *Sulpitius Gallus*, a Heathen Romane, fell out with his wife, because shee went abroad with her face vncouered, and said to her, The law limits my sight vnto thee, to which thou art to approue thy beauty, and to become faire and louely: but to bee willing to bee seene beautifull to others, must needs bring suspition of an ill mind, and a stain withall. I wish husbands to bee *Sulpitius*-like to such wiues as goe thus wantonly bare-breasted, shewing how naked their hearts be vnto lustfull practices. But some foolish and harlotrie husbands doe delight to see their wiues and daughters to goe so; they be like *Asuerus*, who will haue *Vashti* to come forth to shew her selfe; but I wish the wiues in this thing like *Vashti*, and not to yeeld to their drunken humoured husbands to goe so immodestly: but they are, perhaps, rewarded as they iustly deserue sometime: for can the shop-windows alway stand open, and no customers come at any time to buy? Secondly, is *grauitie* according to yeeres, and therefore all fantastick, light, vaine and daily strange fashions, now in one, then in another, is folly and vanitie, apish toying, and argueth great leuitie of mind, condemned by the Word, and by all sober and graue persons. Thirdly, is *frugallitie*, for excessive cost is vnchristinesse, and herein a great consumption to a mans estate, and an argument of idlenesse, if men commonly goe costly. The rich

Zeph. 1. 8.

Luke 15.

Isai. 3.

Pet. de Nata-
lib. Eccles. hist.
lib. 8. cap. 1.

Glutton is taxed for going costly, and fairing daintily every day, which brought him to hell at last. Fourthly, is *humilitie*: for indeed our rayment from the first cause, is a signe of our rebellion against God, and that wee haue lost our innocency; and therefore we haue no more cause to be proud thereof, then a malefactor, of his halter, though it be golden. It is reprobued as a fault in the daughters of *Iudah*, to be so proud of their attire: and we haue more reason to weepe, then to wax high-minded by this couering of our shame and nakednesse. I wish wee were like one *Pambo* a godly man being at *Alexandria*, and there seeing a woman proud of her attire, fell a weeping; and being asked why he so wept, said thus, Two causes mooue me; the one, to consider the perdition of this woman; and the other, for that I being a Christian, cannot study so much to please Christ by innocencie of life, as shee doth hereby desire to please filthy and dishonest men. Fifthly, is *Pietie*: when in time of humiliation and dayes of abstinence, we goe as such should, who feeble the hand of God, and apprehend his displeasure against sinne; and when we so aray our selues daily, as that modesty, grauity, frugality, and humilitie may appeare therein; for why should we not euen in our clothing set forth our profession, and thereby grace our Religion? And this piety shall appeare, if when we garnish the body, wee neglect not to beautifie the soule with learning and Religion; for a man in rich clothes, without other better qualities and endowments of mind,

is,

is, as *Diogenes* said, a sheepe in a golden fleece; and yet such sheepe haue wee in our English pasture, for want of grace, and better education, hauing nothing to set them out withall, but the brauerie of their clothing, which *Augustus Caesar* called, The Ensigne of pride, and the nest of luxurie; which wee finde in these dayes to bee young mens ouerthrow, a let to good house-keeping, an enforcing to enhaunsing of rents in Landlords, and in others to fall to ill shifts, when their owne meanes of lands and reuenues faile them. And thus much for this point.

And get thee downe to the floore.] Take the oportunitie offred, to procure thy welfare: so she is made by *Naomi* her aduice, to goe to *Boaz*, and to demand marriage of him; which might seeme not fitting, but by *Moses* law it was allowed to the woman widow without children, to claime marriage of the next kinsman, if he neglected to take her: and it was no more immodestie for women to claime that right then, then now for one betrothed to challenge the man for her husband: for where God alloweth the thing, it taketh away the scandall and offence, which otherwise might iustly bee giuen, and so others iustly bee offended therewith. Which is not a small comfort against the vncharitable censure of vnaduised persons.

But make not thy selfe knowne to the man, vntill he shall haue done eating and drinking.] Go she must, but so warily is shee to behaue her selfe, as shee should not discouer her selfe, nor make her mind

Vexillum superbia, & nidus luxuria.

Deut. 25.

Matth. 24.
 Ifai. 22. 13.
 Exod. 32. 6.
 1. King. 4. 20.

knowne, vntil he had supped, and was laid downe to rest: so as her mind must be shewed in priuate, and to him alone. *The night, and in priuate, make modest persons utter more freely their thoughts, then otherwise they would in the light, and before company.* The phrase of eating and drinking, implyeth feasting, as appeareth hence from verse 7. and from other Scriptures: so then at such a time as this, it may seeme, the Israelites feasted & made merry, as a signe of gladnes and reioycing in the Lords blessings. Of feasting, I will speake afterwards in verse 7. Here note, that *Naomi* held it the best time to speake of marriage, when *Boaz* had well eaten and drunken; for then are men more apt to speake freely, and to promise their good will, then at other times; this *Naomi* knew well, and therefore aduised *Ruth* to make vse of it. Which beeing so, it should make men at such times more silent, and more obseruant of their speeches.

Verse 4. And it shall be when he lyeth downe, thou shalt marke the place where he shall lye, and thou shalt goe in, and vncouer his feet, and lay thee downe, and he will tell thee what thou shalt doe.

THereft of *Naomi* her aduice to *Ruth*, what she was to doe, when she came to the threshing floore. obserue where *Boaz* lay, then she her selfe to lye downe; and the end, to know his mind, and what she should doe.

And it shall be when he lyeth downe.] After labour follows

followes rest, and the night is appointed for the same, to refresh the wearied limbs: so the Psalmist teacheth, and Iacob practised; and this is the right vse of time. Let vs spend the day in labour, and take the benefit of the night for rest, with thanks to God, and prayer for a blessing; and not bee as wild beasts, as some men bee, who make the day their time of rest, and the night their walking time, as fit to goe abroad to rauen for their prey: or to spend it in vnlawfull and lewde courses, as ill as thest.

That thou shalt marke the place where he shall lye.] This is aduised, lest she should in the night mistake: for warie obseruation preuenteth error. This sheweth also, that Boaz had not any certaine set place to lye downe in, but to lye, as best liked himselfe, in the floore. In those times they had no care of stately lodging; they were not effeminate and slothfull, which make vs now to seeke for soft bedding, which breedeth lust, encreaseth sloth, and maketh the body more tender; and so lesse able to endure paines.

And thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet.] Though Naomi aimed to make Ruth Boaz his yoke-fellow, yet she teacheth her to proceed in humility, to goe to his feet, and to lye downe there: For humilitie is not any let, but the way to aduancement, and the reward thereof is riches, and glory, and life. Let all them which hope for preferment, labour for humilitie: for God giueth such grace and fauour, the humble in spirit shall enioy glorie: vpon Marie her lowlines did the Lord look:

David

Psal. 104. 23.
Gen. 28. 11.

Prov. 15. 33.
& 18. 20.
& 22. 4.

Prov. 2. 34.
& 29. 23.
Luke 1. 48.

PROV. II. 2.
and 16. 18.

David was humble in his owne eyes, and obtained great glorie: and *Abigail* by so wise and humble behaviour, purchased fauour in *Dauids* eyes. On the contrary, by pride commeth confusion, as may appeare in *Abalom* and *Adoniams* attempt to the Kingdome; for shame accompanieth it; and pride goeth before destruction, and a high mind before the fall.

And lay thee downe, and he shall tell thee what thou shalt doe.] *Naomi* was well perswaded of *Boaz* his honestie, and that he would well aduise *Ruth*: for good counsell may be looked for of those that bee truly religious, and wise withall, as *Boaz* was. And there is no doubt of their readinesse, whom experience hath made knowne to be louing and kind. This is it which made *Naomi* to speake thus confidently, that *Boaz* would tell *Ruth* what she should do. But here it may bee demanded, *Whether Naomi did well to aduise Ruth to use this meanes, to trie Boaz his minde?* The manner seemeth not to bee good nor approoueable, and my reasons be these: First, *Naomi* her counsel and aduice to haue *Ruth* to goe to *Boaz* to claime the marriage, was erroneous; for hee was not the next kinsman, and therefore she should not haue come thus first to him. Secondly, *Boaz* his speech implyeth, that it was not a matter of good report for them two to be thus alone together, if they had been scene so. Thirdly, there was some shew and appearance of euill, which should bee auoided. Fourthly, because heere was an occasion of sinning offred, though not taken, nor intended; because fleshli-

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Verse 12.

Verse 14.

1. Theſ. 5.

nesse is that sinne to which most are apt, and the most excellent haue fallen into it; as appeareth in righteous *Lot*, strong *Samson*, wise *Salomon*, and zealous *Dauid*: Yet for all this ill aduice and manner of doing, the Lord turned the same to good. For this is his goodnesse and mercy, that *matters ill begun, the Lord both can and will turne unto good*. Thus he did with *Rebecca* and *Iacobs* dissembling to get the blessing, and with the selling of *Ioseph* by *Iacobs* sonnes his vnnaturall brethren. This example therefore of *Ruth* is not imitable. It giueth no warrant for mothers to teach their daughters to play the harlots, and to be bawdes to them; nor to allow yong women to go to yong men, and to giue their bodies to be abused, in hope of marriage; nor to make night-matches and meetings to procure husbands, whilest they hereby often make themselves whores, to their own shame, and grieve of friends. *If it be not imitable, will some say, why is it recorded?* To answer this, we must know that the actions of the godly are of diuers sorts: either *extraordinarie*, as *Abrahams* offering *Isaac*; *Moses* his killing of the Egyptian; *Israelites* borrowing and carrying away the goods of the Egyptians; *Phinees* killing *Zimri* and *Cozbi*; *Ehud*, *Eglon* King of Moab, and such like: these are not for imitation, but to shew, that God can dispence with his Law, & is not tied to ordinary courses. Or *ordinarie*, and this is manifold, First, good and allowed of God, as *Abrahams* teaching his household, *Iobs* patience, praying for his children, and works
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Heb. 3. 12, 13.

of mercy and iustice; *Cornelius* deuotion; *Pauls* labour in the ministry, and a thousand such like, left written for instruction to acknowledge the strength of grace, and are for our godly imitation. Secondly, bad and vnlawfull, as *Aarons* consenting to the Israelites idolatrie, *Lots* incest, *Dauids* adulterie and murther; *Peters* periurie, and such like: these are not to be imitated, but to be auoided as euill, and are written to make vs to behold mans corruption, and so his desert, that thereby we may set our selues to bewaile the same, to watch ouer our selues, and that none may boast of their owne righteousness, but acknowledge it Gods mercy, that wee are not confounded, and that it is his meere goodnesse that saueth vs. Thirdly, mixt, partly good and partly bad: so was *Rebecca* her seeking the blessing for *Iacob*, which God had promised; and here *Naomi* a marriage for *Ruth*, but the manner in both faultie. These are written to let vs see our imperfections in doing a good thing, and to teach vs to examine the wayes of the best, to know how farre they be imitable. Fourthly, meere indifferent in themselves, neither commanded nor forbidden, as *Samson* his feasting of the yong men at his marriage; *Dauids* delight and playing vpon the harpe, and such like: which are written to shew our libertie in things indifferent, and that we may vse the same, so we be moderate therein. Thus wee see the difference of actions, and why recorded. And these are we to marke, and examine, that wee be not mistaken, whether

whether extraordinarie, or ordinarie, whether good, or bad, or mixt, or indifferent, and euen in these, how lawfull to vs, how expedient also, that we may not giue offence.

Verse 5. *And shee said vnto her, All that thou sayest vnto mee, I will doe.*

Ruths readinesse to obey her mother in law, and that in all things without exception.

And shee said vnto her.] In this conference betweene them two here, is no interrupting of one another: *Ruth* heareth *Naomi* her counsell, and answereth when shee hath heard it; which commendeth her modestie and wisedome; for it is folly to answer a matter, before it be heard.

All that thou sayest vnto me, I will doe.] *Ruth* is as ready to obey, as the other to command: and that in respect, first, of her reuerence towards *Naomi*, and perswasion of her good mind towards her: for *whom we thinke well of and reuerence, their counsell we easily embrace, and willingly obey:* and yet herein may we doe amisse, if we examine not well the matter; for counsell may be sometime from error of the iudgement, and sometime from corrupt affection. Secondly, of her owne inclination to the thing, being young, and poore, to get a rich husband: for wee readily obey in that whereto wee incline our mind of our owne accord, there needeth little incitation.

Verse

Verse 6. *And shee went downe vnto the floore, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her.*

Ruths performance of her promise, both in going downe to the floore, and in doing there, what her mother aduised her.

And shee went downe vnto the floore.] The Citie was then higher from whence shee went, though wee may reade of a floore vp on high, 2. Sam. 24. 18. It may seeme strange how Ruth durst attempt this, being a stranger, and fearefull by nature, as women be: yet see, *where desire is, there nothing can hinder, or amate the spirit, or daunt the heart.*

And did according to all that her mother in law bade her.] As it is in verses 3, and 4. so shee very exactly followed her mothers aduice, and in nothing followed her owne mind, lest perhaps, if things had not fallen out well, shee might haue had the fault put vpon her selfe. Here is an example of strict obedience vnto Parents, which is required at the hands of children. Ruth doth according to all that which shee was bidden to doe. And thus in all lawfull things should children doe to parents, for so God would haue it, it pleaseth him. It is the duety of children, and in so doing they shall be blessed. Let children learne obedience to Parents, as Isaac obeyed Abraham; Iephthes daughter her father, and as our blessed Sauour did his Parents: which they will doe, if they feare God, Leuit. 19. 3. and hold their parents worthy of honour, as God commandeth.

Verse

Col. 3. 20.

Ephc. 6. 2.

Col. 3. 20.

Ephc. 6. 1, 3.

Gen. 22. 6.

Iud. 11. 36, 37.

Luk. 1. 51.

Exod. 20.

Verse 7. *And when Boaz had eaten and drunken, and his heart was merry, he went to lye downe at the end of the heape of corne: and shee came softly, and uncoverd his feet, and laid her downe.*

THis verse sheweth how shee did as her mother bade her, both for the time when, and the manner how.

And when Boaz had eaten and drunke;] meaning largely and freely, as the words following intimate, which it may seeme they vsed at such times as this. Wee may note, that *it is lawfull to eat and drinke more largely at one time than at another;* as in times of feasting, which the Israelites kept in old time, in reaping the fruits of the Earth, as here; so at sheep-shearing they feasted, at the weaning of children, as we at christ'nings, at solemne times of reioicing, at mariages, at such times as God bestowed blessings and speciall fauours, or did graciously deliuer his people; at the intertainment of friends, and louing meetings of brethren and kindred; at such times and vpon such occasions may we eat and drinke, and reioyce our hearts. But yet with these *Caveats*: First, to take heed of excessse, by falling either into gluttony or drunkenness, or wanton songs, or wanton behauour, or by foolish iesting and mocking of the godly, as the Philistims did *Samson*. Secondly, to keep such feasting seasonably, not in time of Gods iudgements, nor in the time of the affliction of the Church; for then

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2.Sam.13.
1.Sam.25.
Gen.21.
Nehc.8.
Gen.29.22.
Iud.14.10.
Mat.22.2.
Iohn 2.
1.King.3.15.
Ester 9.
Gen.26.30.
& 43.34.
Iob 1.

Iud.16.25.

Esa.32.13,14,
15.

Amos 6. 6.

1. Cor. 10. 31.

Tertul. apol.
cha. 36.Psal. 137. 5, 6.
Neh. 8. 11.

Psal. 104. 14, 15.

Gen. 43. 34.

Prou. 31. 6, 7.

it befitteeth vs rather to fast then to feast. Thirdly, that wee behaue our selues Christian-like. First, to praise and blesse the Lord and glorifie him: And here is worth the remembrance, the behauour of the ancient Christians in their feasting together: they sate not downe before thanksgiuing, they ate and dranke moderately, so as they would not hinder their deuotion to God afterwards; their communication such, as they that knew they spake in the Lords hearing: when they had sufficed themselues, they prouoked one another to speake somewhat out of the Scripture, or otherwise good things to the praise of God; by which was triall made how much euery one had drunke; and finally they ended their meeting with prayer; this was a religious and Christian feasting. Secondly, in all our myrth to remember, and not forget, as *Dauid* saith, *Ierusalem*, the Church of God. Thirdly, to remember the poore which want: wee must not bee *Nabal*-like, to feast like a King, and bee without mercy to *Dauid* and his company needing our reliefe; nor as the rich *Dives*, faring diliciously, and suffering the poore to perish at our gates. These *caueats* obserued, wee may eate and bee merry.

And his heart was merry.] Eating and drinking make the heart merry. Thus were *Iosephs* brethren made merry; for the spirits of men hereby are refreshed, and let loose, as it were, from cares; and this benefit we may haue by the Lords creatures, and praise God for the same, so wee keepe a mode-

a moderation, and vse sobrietie, as *Boaz* here, and not become as drunken sots, like *Nabal*.

Hee went to lye downe at the end of the heape of corne.] After his labour and repast, he went to take his rest, not in any dainty bedding, but even in the floore, at the end of the heape: and this did hee for the safetie of Gods blessings, and the better keeping of the corne winnowed, from pilfering. Note hence, I. That pained labour maketh man not curious of his lodging. *Boaz* here can lye hard; *Iacob* a Princes sonne, brought vp daintily at his mothers lap, can take a stone and lay it vnder his head for a pillow, and sleep soundly, being wearied with trauell, which maketh rest and hard lodging very pleasant to him: and howsoeuer *Iacob* might lye better before, yet did he neuer rest more blessedly than in this hard bed: for now the Lord spake to him, and he saw Gods Angels ascending and descending vpon him: for it falleth out, the more the body is pampered, the lesse spirituall comfort; and the lesse the body is chearished, the more is the soule made glad, and the nigher wee be to God. Would we therefore not be nice, nor curious of our lying. Let vs labour our bodies till we be wearie, and we shall take hard lodging without dislike; hunger maketh poore fare sweet; so doth labour make hard lying pleasant. II. That it is good husbandrie to seeke to saue, as well as to get. *Boaz* was noble, wise, rich, and also thriuing, yet mercifull, and therefore not base, but yet would, as need required, see to his owne estate and Gods blessings bestowed

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vpon

Prou. 27. 23.

upon him, that they might not be diminished by purloining hands. This honest care of this great man, and good man too, checketh such spend-thrifts, as doe waste Gods blessings; they bee theeves to themselves, and such as depend upon them; they worke their owne ouerthrow and destruction, and in aduersitie they shall be without comfort: for their consciences will tell them, that they haue iustly brought upon themselves that euill.

And she came softly and vncouered his feet, and laid her downe.] A great shew of euil: for she went to a wrong man, it was also in the night, and alone, to him alone, and after his feasting too; a too bold aduenture, upon her mothers weake aduice in this manner of doing. True it is, the successe was good; but this more of Gods mercy, then the fact deserued. *Boaz* also commended her, vers. 10. but it was not for thus comming, not for the manner, but for the thing intended, to wit, to match with him, shee following the rule of the Word, and not lust to seeke to young men, whether poore or rich. Here we see what *Naomi* contriued, she did with as much cunning, as care, act it; for it is said, shee came softly, secretly, and without any stirre or noyse to awake him, and so laid her down at his feet, waiting when he should of his owne accord awake. *We warily act a thing, where wee be loth to offend*; and there are wee contented to waite patiently, where we feare to doe amisse, as *Ruth* doth here. This wisdom can we shew in attaining our desires in things of the world;

world; Oh that we thus could behaue our selues towards God! and that we might say with the Prophet, *My soule doth waite for the Lord, and in his Word doe I hope*, Psal. 131. 5, 6.

Verse 8. *And it came to passe at mid-night, that the man was afraid, and turned himselfe; and behold, a woman lay at his feet.*

THe euent of *Ruths* thus secretly comming in, and lying at *Boaz* feete vnawares to him. Where note the time when; the euent it selfe; the effect of it; and the occasion of both in the last words.

And it came to passe at mid-night.] Thus long *Boaz* slept after his labour and paines-taking, before hee did awake. Note, that *the wearied body and quiet mind sleepes soundly*: (so *Salomon* telleth vs) eate he little or much. If therefore we would soundly sleepe, being in bodily health, let vs labour our bodies; wearinesse is the best physicke to cast any one asleepe: the idle cannot sleepe, they be troubled with dreames, and foolish fantasies: Wee must also get a quiet spirit, so shall we sleepe without feare: and this is to bee gotten, first, by seeking reconciliation with God in Christ, so may we lye downe in peace with *Dauid*, and not bee afraid: this made *Peter* sleepe soundly in great bodily danger; and the Martyrs, some of them, the night before they went to execution. Secondly, by shaking off the cares of the world, which maketh the worldling that hee can-

Eccles. 5. 12.

Psal. 4. 8. & 3. 5
Iob 11. 14, 19.
Acts 12.

Eccles. 5. 12.

Prov. 4. 16.

not rest. Thirdly, by suffering no euill to reigne in our hearts, as enuie, malice, lust, couetousnesse: for these things will not suffer vs to take rest. Fourthly, to keepe euer a good conscience towards God and man; this is a continuall feast, and giueth vs rest.

Psal. 91. 5.

That the man was afraid.] The best are subiect to feare, vpon conceit of perill, and that suddenly: So was Gideon afraid, and the Apostles on a sudden; and likewise Boaz here, and that vpon these reasons: First, his naturall frailtie and weakenesse of faith, which also is in euery one. Secondly, his ignorance, not knowing what it was, because she came in vnknowne to him, when he was asleepe: and in such cases we be more apt to conceit euill towards vs, then good, because our hearts tell vs, that wee bee wicked by nature, and deserue euill. Thirdly, the darke and dead time of the night, which is to man fearefull: the Psalmist speaketh of the terror of the night. We all by experience know, how easly mans heart is made fearefull in the darke; except in the sonnes of Belial, and the children of the kingdome of darkenesse, hardened in euill, and which make the night the time of their lewde practices; yet euen these also will soone bee stricken into sudden feare. Fourthly, this feare may more suddenly possesse one in the night, as here it did Boaz being alone: for that Spirits haue taken at such times bodily shapes vpon them, and shewed themselues: for the night is their time chiefly, as may be seene in their coming then most commonly to Witches, knowne by

by their owne confession. Let vs therefore hence take notice of this weakenesse, which so sheweth it selfe from the loue we beare to our bodies safetie, and naturall life. Now, if wee feare so much for this cause bodily dangers, Oh how much more should we feare to commit sinne, and the wrath of God for sinne, which bring destruction to body and soule, without timely repentance !

And turned himselfe.] Hee gathered himselfe together shrinking, as the manner is of such as in bed being in sleepe, fall into a sudden feare, and turne to and fro; such a forcible operation hath this feare vpon the whole body, for to decline from, and auoid the danger conceiued, nature seeking to saue it selfe, in apprehension of perill, and that of a sudden. This naturall feare is more quicke and sudden to seaze vpon the heart, then the spirituall feare to auoide sinne, or the displeasure of God, and so the danger of the ruine of our soules: for this danger is not so toone apprehended; here is required the grace of illumination, and of faith, before this can bee wrought in vs.

And behold, a woman lay at his feet.] The feare possessed him without cause. And thus it falleth out often, *Man often feareth without iust cause*: the godly through the weakenesse of their faith, reprooued by Christ: the wicked by their accusing conscience, which maketh them to flie, when none pursue them; they thinke that euill doth haunt them, and perill foundeth in their eares. Therefore let the godly labour for strength of

Matth. 2. 25.

Prou. 28. 1.

Iob 15. 21.

faith, and the wicked repent, and seeke for the peace of a good conscience, that they need not to feare.

Verse 9. *And he said, Who art thou? And shee answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid; spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a neere kinsman.*

THis is Boaz his questioning with Ruth, her answer, with a request to him, and the reason thereof.

And he said, Who art thou?] Boaz comming to himselfe, moderateth his feare, and containeth himself from vnechaste touching, and demandeth what she was. Wee may note, first, that *though feare possesse wise and godly men upon a sudden, yet they moderate it, and are not wholly overcome therewith*: for Boaz heere cryeth not out to seruants for helpe, neither speaketh to her, as one amazed, neither falleth he into a rage with her, that shee should be occasion of such feare: for howsoever the feare suddenly seazed vpon him being fast in sleepe before, yet was it not childish, nor womanish, he soone shooke it off, as a man of courage, hauing confidence in God. He mastered his naturall feare: and so should wee, and not bee over-
swayed therewith, as women and children be. Secondly, *That raging lust should not seaze suddenly vpon honest hearts, and such as feare God.* Boaz was with her alone, yet doth he not in a filthy affection seeke to dishonest her, as *Indah* did *Thamar*;

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mar, being inflamed with lust at the sight of her; he did it on the day time, he asked not what shee was, as *Boaz* doth here, lust would not affoord him that leasure. This continencie is praise-worthy in old *Boaz*, as it was before in young *Ioseph*: a vertue as in these commended, so commanded by God, and much praised in some Heathen, who may rise vp in iudgement against our wanton Youth, and some lecherous old men, whom God doth hate.

And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid.]

Thus *Ruth* calleth her selfe, shewing her humility, as before in chap. 2. 13. and here, by professing what a one shee would be vnto him, humble and seruiceable, as an handmaiden, if shee might obtaine her fute. So said *Abigail*, when *David* sent to her, to take her to wife; and so humble and seruiceable was *Sarah*: for shee called *Abraham* Lord, and in what he commanded, she readily obeyed. And so should good and vertuous wiues doe still, when husbands command but what is honest and iust: not that wiues should be counted in condition as seruants: for as that is more then they will grant, so is it more then husbands of right ought to expect from them that be their yoke-fellowes: but what maid-seruants and handmaidens doe of feare, and seruile dutie, wiues should do of loue with chearefulnes such offices, as they ought to performe vnto their husbands, who haue authoritie to command. Therefore let wiues learne to obey, as God commandeth them to doe in all things, and that with reuerence, as

Gen. 39.

2. Sam. 25. 41.

Gen. 18. 6.

Ephes. 5. 22, 33

Col. 3. 12.

1. Sam. 24. 14.

Gen. 18.

1. Tim. 1. 13.

1. Cor. 13. 9.

Reuel. 3.

vnto the Lord, and as it is fit in the Lord, as the Apostle teacheth. And doubtlesse there would be more such, then we find in these dayes, if they might haue *Abrahams* to their husbands, louing, wise in instructing them, and giuing them honour as the weaker vessels. Note farther, how this worthy woman doth humble and debase herselfe: for *the Godly think lowly and meanely of themselves*; as did *Abigail*, also *Dauid*, that worthy Centurion, who said, That hee was not worthy that Christ should come vnder his roofe. *Abraham* likewise did call himselfe dust and ashes; Saint *Paul* did greatly humble and vilifie himselfe: for the godly are not selfe-louing, they see and know what they be by nature; they are not like the Angel of the Church of Laodicea, which thought highly of himselfe, and that he wanted nothing, when yet he was poore, and blind, and naked, and miserable. They know, if they haue any thing, that the same is from God, that the more they haue, whether gifts of body, or mind, or of the world, or the graces of the soule spirituall and heauenly, the more they be indebted, and the more they are to answer for. These things considered, make them lowly in their owne eies, and to behaue themselves so vnto others, as all that feare God ought to doe, and should goe one before another in giuing of honour; and not in taking it, as the world now doth.

Spread therefore thy skirt ouer thine handmaid.]

In this phrase of speech shee modestly claimeth marriage of him: for some do write, that it was a custome

custom when they were contracted, that the man did throw ouer the woman, the lap or wing of his garment, in token that he took her into his protection. The word is taken from Fowles, which couer vnder their wings their yong from danger. By which, *husbands* are to learne, that they *either are, or should be a protection to their wiues*; for the woman bestoweth her selfe vpon the man, forsaking for his loue, father and mother, to bee vnder his couert as his wife; she is then as himselfe, and he is to loue her as being become one flesh; and as the head, he is to care for her aswell as to rule and gouerne her. And therefore let husbands shew themselues to be such: & this shal they do, if they doe giue their wiues countenance, and do grace them with all their credit; if they vpon all iust occasions stand for them, defend their persons, honestie and credit against others; if they loue, cherish, and nourish them, as their owne bodies, affording them all honest contentment, then are they good protectors. And if husbands be the wiues protection, and that they looke to haue them so, let them depend vpon their husbands, let them keepe close to them, and by a louing obedience procure protection thus from them: from which some husbands are so farre, as some wish them dead, and so in heart are murderers; some expose them to all miserie by their vnthriftinesse; some runne from them, and leaue them to the wide world; some offer them, or at least bawd-like, are willing to haue them giue their bodies vnto the lusts of others, that they
may

Gen. 20. 16.

may liue thereby; others there be which murder them, to bee rid of them. All these are false and faithlesse husbands, breaking promise to their wiues made to them before God and his Church, cursed caitifes, running headlong to destruction, without honesty, loue, or naturall kinnesse to their owne posteritie.

Deut. 25.

For thou art a neere kinsman.] Here is the reason of her request grounded vpon Gods Law, as she had learned by her mother in law. This is her onely reason which she vseth to Boaz, for that he was a good and a godly man, with whom the strongest argument to preuaile, is the Word of God: for *the Word hath authoritie in godly mens hearts*; it bindeth their consciences, and forceth them to yeeld, it commandeth them more, then all, other reasons besides. And therefore in hauing to doe with such, gather arguments soundly from the Word of God; for these will worke vpon good mens hearts, and in vsing such reasons aright, the Lord, and not man, may bee said to speake vnto them: which course, though worldlings mocke at, yet such as feare the Lord, will weigh and consider of, for that they doe desire to square and frame their whole life after the Word and Law of God.

Verse

Verse 10. *And hee said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindnesse in the latter end, then at the beginning, in as much as thou followest not young men, whether poore or rich.*

BOAZ his reply vnto *Ruth*, when hee knew who shee was; wherein hee blesteth her, commendeth her, and giueth the reason of such his commendation of her.

And hee said.] His answer is full of kindnesse and loue, neither doth he reprove her any thing at all, though hee iustly might for her thus comming in this manner: but *Boaz* being a good man, considered rather the lawfulnessse of the matter which she came for, then of the manner of seeking it: then also her ground, and the reason mouing her to come to him, which was the Law of God. Thirdly, the estimation of her person, being held a vertuous woman generally of all. And lastly, his fulnesse of charitie, which taketh things in the best part, and is not easily offended, made him not to reprove her: For a good mā full of mercy and loue, doth not lightly condemne the vertuous for some shewes of euill, for missing in the manner, where the matter intended is good. For here the matter was lawfull, the ground and inducement iust, the person honest and generally well spoken of, and her intendement not ill. When these things concurre, we are not to take exceptions against the manner, or failing in some light

2.Sam.10.

1.Cor.13.

1.Sam.17.17,
18,18.

light circumstance. Herein let vs imitate good and godly *Boaz*; and let vs not bee like such rigide Censurors, as those bee which condemne the best things, if they bee not euery way as they ought. Those also which make a small fault a great offence; reiecting the whole matter for the manner; the person for a little mistake. Oh how would a proud and churlish *Nabal* haue taken vp this poore woman, a widdow and a stranger, if shee had come to him for marriage, especially if shee had mistaken him, as *Ruth* here did *Boaz* in some sort! What shame, what impudency would he haue laid vpon her, & so haue reiect-ed her? And those likewise which take things indifferent in ill part, as *Hannun* the King of the Ammonites did *Danids* Ambassadors, which is greatly against charity, & an argumēt of an enuious, malicious and proud nature, as may be seene in *Danids* brethren against him, misinterpreting his comming, being sent by his Father to them.

Blessed bee thou of the Lord.] These words shew how well hee tooke her comming and request made touching marriage; hee scorneth her not, hee putteth her not off, but accepts her, as appeareth afterwards, and euen in these words, when hee saith to so poore a woman relieved by his *Almes*, *Blessed be thou of the Lord.*] Which words may bee taken either as a petition, or as an affirmation. If as a petition, that the Lord would blesse her, then are the lessons the same with those in Chap. 2.20. where the same words are vsed by *Naomi* for him, as hee doth here for *Ruth*:
excepting

excepting this circumstance, that there *Naomi* a poore woman prayeth for the rich, and here the rich prayeth for the poore; of which also before in Chap. 2. 12. If, as an affirmation of that which he iudged her to be: as if he had said, *Blessed art thou of the Lord*: thou art an happy and blessed woman, as in Luk. 1. 28. for in Hebrew the word *be*, or *art* is not expressed, but onely thus, *Blessed thou of the Lord*, and so may be vnderstood either *be*, to make it a petition; or *art*, to make it an affirmation: and then wee learne, That *the godly, though poore, yet are blessed*, and so accounted of *Boaz*, that is, of a godly man, who can iudge of true blessednesse: for the godly haue those things wherein true blessednesse consisteth: As first, Gods fauour in Christ, and through him are the Children of his Father, therefore called blessed. Secondly, they haue the fruits of the Spirit, and the practice of vertue, and for this they bee pronounced blessed. Thirdly, they haue the pardon of sinne, and their sinnes put away in Christ, and shall not be imputed to them, and therefore are blessed. Fourthly, they haue the assurance of eternall life, which is promised onely to such, and cannot be taken from them; and therefore most blessed, though they want these outward things, as their Master Iesus Christ himselfe did, whilest hee liued heere on Earth. Let this comfort the godly poore, and make them to reioyce more in their godlinesse, then the worldlings in their earthly treasure; the carnall man in his pleasure; or the vaine glorious in his honour. This should
make

Luk. 1. 28.
with 11. 28.

Mat. 25.

Psal. 119. 1. 2.
& 128. 1.

Psal. 32. 1. 2.

Ioh. 10. 27, 28.

Pfal. 101.

Gen. 16. 18.

Heb. 11.

Pfal. 101.

make men esteeme of the godly, as *David* did, and as *Abimelech* did of *Isaac*: also to endeavour to be like them, if we account them blessed, and to esteem their reproach for righteousness sake, to bee more honour, then the glory of *Pharaohs* court, as *Moses* did; to haue them to dwell with vs, to haue our delight in them, as *David* had in the Saints, for they are blessed. And if so, then this confuteth the carnall conceit of worldlings, who thinke not so of them, especially if poore: yet let such consider our Master Christ how poore hee was; also the afflicted state of the Saints mentioned in Heb. 13. 37. yet pronounced to bee such as the world was not worthy of. And lastly, how *Ioseph* a Prince in Egypt, did rather choose to put his sonnes into *Iacobs* family, and to bee called his children, than into *Pharaohs* court, to bee accounted mightie among the Egyptians.

Tit. 2. 1, 2, 3.

Iosua 7.

My daughter.] See Chap. 2. 8. Thus he might call her, as beeing old: for the ancient are to be as Fathers, and old women as Mothers vnto the younger sort, in teaching them good things by word and by example. So as a Magistrate hee might so speake to her, as *Iosuah* spake to *Achan*; for magistrates are to be as Fathers to the people; and to tender them as their children: but of this before. Note how she called her selfe his handmaid, but he is pleased to tearme her by the name of daughter, though shee so had debased and humbled her selfe. For the humbling of our selues maketh our esteeme to be nothing lesse, but rather greater, with
such

such as be godly and wise; see Chap. 2. 10, 11, 12. where the more *Ruth* did humble her selfe, the more account did *Boaz* make of her: for such as humble themselves, shall bee exalted. Let none then thinke by humbling themselves, that they shall lose credit and honour, as foolishly the base borne, and new start-up doth imagine: for they cannot but be suspicious of contempt, who know themselves vnworthy of honour and esteeme.

For thou hast shewed more kindnesse in the latter end, then at the beginning.] This is the reason of his blessing of her, or accounting of her blessed, because shee encreased and did not decay in goodnesse. *The truly vertuous and heartily religious are better at last than at the first.* As the Angel of the Church of Thyatira; and as it is said of *Ruth* here in her kindnesse and loue: for goodnesse, grace, and vertue where it is truly planted, will increase rather then decay: for the Lord husbands such Trees, by his Word, his Spirit, and afflictions. Wee must therefore labour for this commendation, if wee will be held truly vertuous, truly honest, kind, iust, mercifull, and gracious: but some are farre from this praise, growing worse and worse, till they be starke naught, whether it be in respect of Religion, as we see in *Iehu*, *Demas*, *Alexander* the Copper-smith, and *Iudas*, who were worst at last, because they were neuer truly good at the first: or in respect of loue and kindnesse, as here spoken of *Ruth*, which loue some turne into hatred, and kindnesse into cankred

Iohn 15. 2.

1. Thes. 4. 1.

cankred malice, and shew more ill will at the last, then loue at the first; like *Amon* to his sister *Tamar*, and *Saul* to *Dauid*: for that loue was neither good nor sound in them, as *Ionathans* was to *Dauid*, and *Ruths* to *Naomi*, and hers to *Ruth* againe.

In as much as thou followest not young men, whether poore or rich.] *Boaz* in the other words gaue a reason of his blessing of her; here he giueth a reason of his so commending her kindnesse: which appeareth to bee more at the last now, than at the first, to wit, to her husband deceased, and to her now mother in law *Naomi*, because shee married him in her owne countrey, and him rather then any of her owne nation, which was kindnesse; then, for *Naomi* her sake to leave her owne countrey, and to come and dwell with her in *Iudah* in a poore estate; this was great kindnesse: but now to be ruled by *Naomi*, beeing so yong a woman, to seeke to match with an old man, and not to follow nature, in desiring yong men; but the Law of God, for to raise vp a name againe vnto her dead husband, whom by this meanes shee maketh to liue againe in *Israel*, this is it which maketh her kindnesse to bee more at last then at the first, in louing an old man rather than any yong, and him also for the dead sake, to reuiue his name among the people of God. See here in *Ruth*, how true loue, obedience to good counsell, and grace, doe overcome nature, and the law of lust: for shee loued her husband, shee was obedient to *Naomi*, and in her selfe vertuous, and therefore

fore reason and Religion did take place, and neither nature, nor lust preuailed with her. A good example for youth to follow. Note out of these words farther these lessons: First, that *as now, so then, and euer before, there haue beene two sorts, rich and poore in the world.* First, to shew in one, what all might haue beene; and in the other the poore, what all deserue to bee. Secondly, that the rich may haue occasion to shew workes of mercy, and the poore labouring painefully and honestly, may haue to whom to goe vnto for reliefe: for the rich are Gods Stewards for the poore. Let both seeke to liue together louingly, and to helpe one another; the poore, to lend their labour to the rich, and the rich to supply their wants; for the one cannot liue without the other: all cannot bee rich, neither must all bee poore. Let vs rest contented with our estates; let not the poore murmur with enuy at the rich; neither let these despise the poore: for God hath made them both, and one to stand in need of the other. Secondly, that *yong persons in nature affect to marry with yong persons like themselves;* which is implied by *Boaz* speech. So did *Isaac* marry, and *Iacob*; and so in ancient time were matches made. If euer old and young married together, it was the old man with a young woman, but neuer an old woman with a young man, as the wanton and lecherous often doe with wanton young fellows in these dayes, to the staine of their sexe, and reproach to themselves, and often their vtter

vndoing. For youth cannot affect old age, and therefore it is fittest that marriage bee made betweene such as may most likely agree together; other matches proue for the most part vntoward. Thirdly, *The truly religious will be ruled by the Law of God, and will not be led after their naturall disposition.* For here *Ruth* leaueth the young men, and taketh an old man, because the Law so bound her, as she conceiued, taking *Boaz* for the neereſt Kinsman: because such as be truly religious, haue denied themselues, and doe resigne themselues wholly to Gods good pleasure and will, saying as *Christ* said, *Not my will, O Father, but thy will bee done.* Hence was it that *Ioseph* did abstaine from his Mistresse; *Dauid* frō smiting *Saul*, when twice he might haue done it, to get the kingdom; he rather would waite, and endure much affliction; for he that beleeueth, saith *Isaiab*, maketh not haste. And hence is it, that such as feare God, dare not follow the course of the world, but doe reſtraine their nature, and their desires, and do endeavor to please God in all things. If this be the grace of the religious, let men hereby trie themselues, and bee as God wiſheth them to bee, and as Religion and Grace it ſelfe requireth them to be, as *Dauid* promiſed and prayed to be. They are ſurely then far frō being religious, which liue according to their luſts; thoſe that will follow the world with *Demas*, and *Iudas*, and *Nabal*, but not forſake it, as *Barnabas*, & *Zacheus* did; thoſe that wil follow the fleſh, as the young men did their eyes in the old world, and as *Potiphars* wife, who was inamour'd with faire

Matth. 26. 39.

Deut. 5. 29.
Pſal. 86. 11.
and 119. 5.
James 1. 37.
Tit. 2. 11, 12.

Aſts 4. 37.
Luke 19.

Gen. 6.

faire *Ioseph*; few *Iosephs* among the vainely & idly
vp bred Youths of the Gentry in our dayes. And
yet such will hunt after honours, and vaine titles;
and if they cannot merit the, they wil pay money
for them: the insolencie and pride of *Haman*, the
aspiring arrogancie of *Absalom* and *Adoniah*,
are reigning in many. And haue we not Scribes
and Pharises which loue the highest places? Is
there a *Jonathan* among thousands? Where is a
Moses, that wil be no more a Courtier for feare of
sinning? Will a *Saul* become a *Paul*, so well train-
ed vp? Or can there be found a *Manaen*, a Prin-
ces foster brother, to ioyne to the Church, and to
become a Teacher, in meere loue to Religion?
Do they not rather scorne the Calling? And yet
to call these worldlings, these fleshly liuers, and
these vaine-glorious spirits, prophane, irreligious,
louers of pleasures more then louers of God, Oh
how would they take on! How enraged would
they be! so they loue to be held religious, or not to
be without Religion; and yet in works deny God,
being abominable, and disobedient, & vnto eu-
ery good work reprobate, as the Apostle speaketh.

Heb. 11.

Acts 13. 1.

Titus 1. 16.

Verse 11. *And now, my daughter, feare not, I will
doe to thee all thou requirest: for all the Citie of my
people doth know, that thou art a vertuous woman.*

Boaz gaue her before due commendation,
here is now his consolation, and comforting
of her, first, by a dehortation, willing her not to
feare, then by a faithfull promise to satisfie her
request, yeelding a reason of the same.

Gen. 22. 7, 8.

1. Sam. I. 8.

Luke 1. 43.

1. Sam. 3. 16.

Ios. 7. 19.

Iob 31. 13.

Chap. 2. 8.

Chap. 2. 13.

And now, my daughter.] Boaz still vseth this terme, both for that he loued her, and desired to comfort her. We may here see in Boaz, that a louing and mercifull heart is not rough in tearmes; as an vnloving and mercilesse Nabal is. This we may see to bee so betweene louing Parents and children, in Abraham and Isaac; betweene kind married couples, as in Isaac and Rebecca, Elkanah and Hannah; and betweene louing friends, and godly disposed, as in Elizabeth and Marie, S. Paul and other Christians, or Labourers with him in the Gospell, and also in Eli and Samuel: for louing natures, whether they bee high and honourable, speaking to meane persons, as Boaz to Ruth heere; or old and in authoritie, to such as bee young, as Eli to Samuel; or such as sit in iudgement, speaking to Malefactors, as Ioshua to Achan; or a Master vnto his seruants, as Iob to his; or one giuing an almes to the poore, as Boaz to Ruth: it is all one, they are not rough nor churlish; for they be neither proud nor impatient. And therefore, if we would be held louing and mercifull, let vs vse louing and kind speeches. Note againe, that louing and kind speeches of great and rich persons, are comfortable vnto the poore, as Ruth before confesseth; and therefore Boaz doth heere vse them, to cheere vp the spirit of this poore woman: for kind words witnesse a kind heart, if the speakers be not dissemblers. Now, the apprehension of hearty loue in the mighty, gladdeth much the heart of such as be poore, and in a low estate. Let therefore the mighty and rich learne to shew forth

forth kindnesse, and to speake louingly. By it *Dauid* so speaking to *Amasa*, passing by his fault with *Absalom*, bowed the heart of the Tribe of *Judah*, as one man. How did *Absalom* win the hearts of the people? was it not by louing speeches, and courteous behauiour, which bee of an attractive vertue to gaine mens affections? How singularly beloued was our late Queene *Elizabeth* of most blessed memorie, for this vertue, of all her true subiects, in that she was so affable, & full of louing speeches, and of a gracious carriage towards them? The contrary wee may see in *Rehoboam*, who by rough and contemptible speeches alienated the hearts of ten Tribes from him for euer. The mightie therefore shall doe wisely to speake with mildnesse, to vse termes of loue and respect; whereby they shall procure loue, reputation and due honour vnto themselves.

2. Sam. 19.
13, 14.

Feare not.] That is, feare not to bee deceiued of thy hope: though thou be poore, and I rich, let no such thought trouble thee, that I should therefore make light account of thee: for I am well disposed in my affection to thee; therefore feare not: thus *Boaz* speaketh vnto *Ruth*. For he knew, and so doe we, that it is a common thing to feare the issue, where earnest desire is to obtaine the thing; especially where it may in some respects seeme vnlikely to come to passe, as *Ruth* might here so conceiue, when shee should consider what they two were, and the great difference betweene them. For in such a case there cannot be a full perswasion of the euent; the poorer and meaner party

may iustly feare contempt, and vsually such a one feareth the alterabilitie of mans nature, though hapely good words may passe betweene them for the present. And therefore in such a case it is good and fitting for the partie, of whom kindnes is expected, to giue to the other some tokens of assurance, nor to doubt, nor feare, as Boaz doth in this place, and in the words following.

I will doe thee all that thou requirest. By this Boaz taketh away her feare and doubt, in that he promiseth her marriage. For, *where a godly and honest man maketh a promise, there is no feare of performance*; because hee maketh conscience of his word, and knoweth himselfe in equitie bound to the performance of the same. And therefore may wee rest vpon an honest mans word, though in these dayes many would bee held honest, which make no conscience of breach of promise. In that Boaz here maketh her a promise of marriage, and so contracteth himself vnto her, but yet *de futuro*, as it is said, & conditionally, as the two next verses shew, we may note, that *it is lawfull to betroth and contract our selues one to another before marriage.* It was an vsuall thing among Gods people in former times; which betrothing is either lawfull or vnlawfull: lawfull, which is made by parties that may lawfully marry, which be free in their choise, of yeeres of discretion to make their choise: and therefore contracts made of such as bee within degrees forbidden, of contrary religions, betrothed already to others, or defectiue in nature, or wanting iudgement what they doe, or being vnder

Exod. 21. 9.

Deut. 20. 7.

Mat. 1. 18.

der government of Parents and not free, are not to bee allowed. Now further, this lawfull contracting is either conditionall, or absolute, and the same *de presenti*, or *de futuro*, I take thee, or I will take thee to be my wife. If conditionall, then it bindeth no farther then the obseruing of the condition bindeth; for if that be not kept, the parties bee free, vnlesse they giue their bodies in the meane space one to another. If it bee absolutely made, and by such as may so contract themselues, they be man and wife before God, and may not be sundred one from another. These things are to be therfore considered of in contracts, vsed before marriage, for the parties better settling of their affections one vpon another, for the better acquainting themselues with the conditions and qualities of each other, and to fit themselues for house-keeping, and more conuenient liuing together, hauing made some honest prouision before hand.

For all the citie of my people doth know, that thou art a vertuous woman.] The reason why hee yeeldeth to take her to wife: her portion was her vertues, for which she was generally commended of all. This reason did the more confirme her, and easily remoued away feare, when she might perceiue vpon what ground he was induced to marrie with her. Hence may arise many lessons: first, that *vertue maketh euen the poore and strangers too to become famous*, as may appeare in this poore widow a Moabiteffe woman. So it made *Dauid* famous in the dayes of *Saul*, though hee sought to

obscure his name; and likewise *Barnabas* in the Primitiue Church: for vertue will not bee hid, neither can it. And therefore such as desire renowne, labour for vertue. Is not *Abigail* famous for her wisdom? *Ioseph* for his chastitie? *Moses* for his meekenesse? *Samuel* for his iustice? *Dauid* for his zeale? *Ehud*, *Gideon*, and *Iephth* for their fortitude, and so the seuen and thirtie Worthies of *Dauid* for their valiant acts? *Ester* for her humility? the sinfull woman for her penitencie? the sonnes of *Ionadab* the son of *Rechab* for their temperance? This is the way, and the best way to get fame and true honour for euer; and yet few tread aright in this path, but rather they will make themselves so notorious by villany, that all may know them to be vicious persons, without shame, without blushing, like those which *Esaie* & *Jeremy* speake of, which would not hide their sins, neither bee ashamed for them. Secondly, that the godly and vertuous will take notice of such as bee vertuous among them: for so doe here all the people of *Bethlehem*, the people of God; because they loue vertue, hauing it in themselves, they desire to encourage others that be so, and reioyce therein, and therefore doe they speake thereof, and spread abroad the name of it, to make the parties which be vertuous, to be honoured. This is comfort to such as liue well, though they doe not, nor may thereby seeke praises, yet shall they be taken notice of. And by this may men consider of themselves whether they be vertuous, if they will take notice of graces in others, and reioycingly

Isai. 3. 9.
Ier. 6. 15.

ioycingly speak thereof, to the honour and praise of the vertuous. Thirdly, that *a godly man will take a wife for her vertues*, as Boaz doth here Ruth; so did David for her vertues chuse *Abigail*: for a vertuous woman is louely, and her price, as *Salomon* saith, is farre aboue the Rubies: the heart of her husband may safely trust in her, so that hee shall haue no need of spoile. Let men therefore in marrying make this choise; for such a woman is a crowne to her husband, and she retaineth honour. And yet this is the least reckoned of in these dayes: but now beauty, wealth, honour and friends, are the motiues to make marriages. Fourthly, that *a good report for vertue in a woman, is a good portion, and a meanes of preferment*: Thus came poore Ruth to so honourable and rich an husband, hauing neither wealth, nor friends. For such a woman hath the best and most durable helpe of true loue, euen vertue; she hath the Lord to speake for her, and to procure her fauour, and to cause her to bee beloued. This should make women to strue for vertue, and to get a good name from it, and not for beautie and braue attyre: for a good name is better then riches, then precious oyntment, and rather to bee chosen then great riches. Let Parents hence learne to bring vp their daughters vertuously, it is a good portion and meanes of preferment. This may comfort poore maidens which bee vertuous, and want friends and goods, by a good report yet may they match well; let them strue therefore, though they want goods, yet to get grace and.

Pro. 31. 10, 11.

Prou. 12. 4.
and 11. 16.Eccles. 7. 1.
Prou. 23. 1.

Prou. 31.30.

and good conditions, as pietie and Religion in heart; and modestie in countenance, apparell, and gesture; let them preferue chastitie, and not bee giuen to youthfull company; let them bee skilfull in good huswifrie, painfull also and industrious, & hauing power to gouerne the tongue; if thus they be beautified and enriched, they haue a better portion then many pounds, and faire enough to the wise in heart, so as they will giue a good man contentment: for beauty is fading, and fauour deceitfull and vaine, but a woman that feareth the Lord, shall be praised.

Verse 12. *And now it is true, that I am thy neere kinsman: howbeit, there is a kinsman neerer then I.*

BOAZ his information of *Ruth*, wherein shee was somewhat mistaken, granting the truth that he was a neere kinsman, but not the neereft: so as here he preuenteth her apprehension of the promise made, for taking it absolutely, but conditionally, as in the next verse more at large hee declareth his mind. So that heere is a concession of that which she had spoken of him in vers. 9. and withall an instruction touching another neerer then himselfe, which she knew not of.

And now it is true.] Boaz will not deny a truth, for a godly man is a louer of the truth, and will yeeld to it, when hee heareth it: for it swayeth with him, which if it so did with euery one, it would preuent tedious disputes & contentions among the Learned;

Learned; preuent long suites of law; put Lawyers to silence in corrupt pleading, and saue many pounds contentiously misspent, preuent deceit in buying and selling, and many other mischiefs, which miserably fall out for want of acknowledging the truth, which men should and would doe, if they hated falshood and lying, if they had a hearty loue of the truth, if they would cast off pride and the desire of vaine praises, and couetousnesse, and the greedy desire of gaine; for these hinder the truth; and where these reigne, hardly will truth bee acknowledged as it ought, or reigne among men as it should.

That I am thy neere kinsman.] Foure things might moue him thus ingeniously to confesse himselfe so nigh a kinsman to those poore women. First, his loue to the truth, so to speake as the thing was. Secondly, his holy and religious respect vnto the Law of God, by authority whereof shee made claime to him. Thirdly, his humility and vprightnesse of heart, not disdain-
 ing his godly poore kindred. Fourthly, her owne vertues, and his loue which he bare to her for the same. (Of rich and poore kinsfolks I haue spoken before in Chap. 2. 20.) Here obserue, that *a loving, godly, humble, and vpright-hearted rich man will readily confesse himselfe of neere kindred to his poore kinsfolke, if they be vertuous: for vertue maketh them honourable with the vertuous, though pouertie make them contemptible to the world. And therefore for the poore to get an acknowledgement of them from their rich kindred,*

kindred, let them be vertuous, that whereas they want goods, grace may procure them fauour and respect: for poore and lewd are not worthy the acknowledging, being contemptible both in body and soule.

Howbeit there is a kinsman neerer than I.] So that the nearest to a right, are first to be preferred thereto: this is here implied; and this reason and equitie will yeeld. Therefore Boaz honestly maketh heere mention of this other kinsman, to whom Ruth should first haue gone: for both Naomi and shee were mistaken in this, to come first to Boaz for the right of marrying her: yet see how courteously and louingly hee answereth her, teaching, that such as demand in simple ignorance a matter at our hands as due, and yet in some sort not so, wee are meekely to informe them, and not scornfully to reiect them, as great Ones now will doe: for a simple errour is pardonable, and it is a fruit of goodnesse to informe them in the right: and this would preuent contention and strife, which otherwise might grow thereupon for want of better information. Let this then reprove those which gladly take occasion from such mistakes, to laugh at and iest away the parties, making themselves very merry with the parties simplicitie, though their meaning be both good and honest.

Verse

Verse 13. *Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if hee will performe vnto thee the part of a kinsman, well, let him doe the kinsmans part: but if hee will not doe the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I doe the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liueth: lie downe vntill the morning.*

BOAZ his confirmation of his promise before, concerning his marrying of *Ruth*: wherein is noted the time when hee will goe about it, vpon what condition hee will doe it, the confirmation it selfe by solemne oath, and his aduice to rest for that night till the morning.

Tarry this night.] Boaz deferreth to performe the kinsmans part for a space, though very short: and seeing it was night and now dangerous for her to goe alone from thence, hee aduiseeth her to tarry there that night in the floore. Note first, that *vpon reasonable cause, that may bee deferred, which cannot absolutely be denyed to be done.* Which may bee of vse to checke the impatient of delay, when there may be good reason and iust cause of delaying the matter. Secondly, that *a true and louing friend careth for the safety of such as he loueth.* Thus *Lot* tooke care for his guests; *Michol* for *Dauids* escaping from the hand of *Saul*: so *Ionathan* in this respect shewed his care and loue to *Danid*, and *Habshu* his friend likewise. So did the Disciple care for *Pauls* safetie: for true loue is not onely to doe fauours, but to expell iniuries, and to preuent dangers from friends. Which repro-

Act. 9.

ueth

ueth the ill friendship of men in these daies; for some will see their friends running into euill, yet will not care by good counsell to preuent it, much lesse being in trouble to seeke their deliuerance, if it should haply proue either troublesome or costly: for neither of these will these counterfeite friends bestow vpon those they pretend to loue, when they stand in need of them. Some are worse, euen *Indas*-like, who for gaine will betray their friend; or play *Achitophels* part, turne his counsel against him for hope of fauour, when he thinkes his friend downe the wind, and another like to arise: such false and faithlesse hearts may now be found more than enow, who also will expose their friend into any danger or losse, so they may get or saue thereby. Let men therefore learne soundly to try, before they too hastily trust the pretended, rather then truely intended loue in these dayes: for now is falsehood in friendship, for that commonly euery man loueth another for himselfe onely, as experience sheweth: for otherwise true friends will be as *Jonathan*, who valued nothing of a Kingdome for his friend *Dauids* sake; they will be like *Hushai* in aduising for *Dauids* welfare; as *Barzillai* in relieuing him in distresse, and in shewing him kinnesse when most were against him, as *Abishai* in exposing himselfe into imminent danger for his safetie. What friends can be found like the Heathen Mariners to *Ionah*, who in a tempest stroue with all their powers to saue him, with danger of all their liues? or like the Nurse of *Mauricius*
the

the Emperours child, who offered her owne to be slaine by that bloudie *Phocas*, to preferue her foster childes life, the sonne of the Emperour? Rare examples worthy imitation, but not to be paralleled in these dayes. But to returne to *Boaz*, it may be asked, *Why he would suffer her to be within alone in the floore all night?* I answer, his care of her safetie: for hee would rather admit of an inconuenience to himselfe, then the danger of a mischiefe to her, knowing the wickednesse of the times then. Againe, it may be, he felt in himselfe strength by Gods grace, and also a resolution to withstand the temptation, because he was a man of yeeres (though yet some old are wanton enough:) because he was a iust man (as it is said of *Ioseph*, the husband of *Mary*) and would preferue right to his neighbour. And thirdly, for that he had an honest and true intent to marry her, if so hee might, and therefore hee would not offer her dishonesty; though many of vnbridled affections make such oportunities, ready motives to themselves of abasing themselves one with another: because (forsooth) they mind to marry: Of which euill in this Booke elsewhere I haue spoken.

And it shall be in the morning.] So *Boaz*, though hee deferred it, yet it was but a very little while; hee would not long, as *Naomi* saith after, delay the matter: for *a wise man will not bee over-hastie, yet will hee not neglect, but hasten the businesse which hee taketh in hand:* For the one is the property of a foole, but the other of a man of vnderstanding, if so be the matter doe require haste: for there be

two

Mat. 1.

See Verse 14.

Verse 18.

Prou. 14. 25.

2. Chro. 35. 22.
Numb. 14. 40.

2. Sam. 10. 5.

two extremes in businesſes to be auoided: the one is too great haſte, where need is not: and this is raſhneſſe, puniſhed in good *Iofias*, and in the heady *Iſraelites*: the other is too great remiſſneſſe and ſlackeneſſe, when the matter requirerh haſte, which was *Amasä* his fault. And therefore the matter is to be conſidered of, and thereby wee may iudge when to make haſte, and when to take more time and deliberation: for that is not raſhly attempted, which is firſt vnder taken with good aduice, though with ſpeed executed. Secondly, done ſeaſonably, as the circumſtances of the time, place, and perſons require. Thirdly, whē it is done by our calling warrantably. When a man faileth in theſe, though hee take time enough, hee is but a raſh Aduenturer.

That if hee will performe to thee the part of a kinsman;] That is, if hee will marry thee, and raiſe vp the name of the dead: for he is before me by right to take or reſuſe thee; ſo as if he will haue thee, thou canſt not reſuſe him: then take him, and ſo an end hereof betweene vs. Though it appeareth many wayes, that *Boaz* had an earneſt affection to *Ruth*, yet would hee not wrong the kinsman, if hee would haue her: for a good and a juſt man, euen in what hee deſires, will not wrong another: becauſe the Law of righteouſnes bindeth him to juſt dealing, of which hee maketh conſcience. So requireth the Law of loue, which poſſeſſeth his heart, which is, to loue another as himſelfe, and to doe as he would be done vnto. And thus ſhould euery man learne to doe, and not to withhold

Ier. 22. 3.

Matth. 22. 37.
Mat. 7. 12.

withhold any good from the owner thereof, and to whom it is due. In this kind owe nothing to any man, neither wrong any: for *God is an Avenger of all such things.* Here then come iustly to be re-
proued such as make no conscience of wronging others; of which sort are all these: First, Theeues and Robbers, against which the Prophet and Apostle speaketh. 2. Partakers with such, by counsell, command, consent, prouoking, flattery, concealing, receyuing, defending, or (if it be in our power,) by not punishing such: for such be wicked persons, & such do hate their owne soules. Thirdly, fraudulēt persons, of which there be these: first, such as pretend law, to doe wrong, as the Iudge in giuing wrong sentence for by-respects, who by the Prophet are called theeues. So Lawyers, in craftie pleading to ouerthrow iustice and innocencie; the Sheriffes in panelling partiall Iuries to pleasure men; and all such as be false witnesses, or procure their vniust cause to passe, by giuing bribes. To these may be added deceitfull buyers & sellers, in praising or dispraising ouermuch for aduantage, in cōunterfeit wares, in false weights and measures. So likewise those Villaines, cōunterfeit Bankrupts, damnable Theeues, Cony-Catchers, cheating Gamesters, and Gnathonicall Knaues, who soothe & flatter, to gaine by others simplicity and folly. Fourthly and lastly, such as withhold goods from the owners, and will not make restitution, as in conscience they are bound: for so God commandeth and promiserh mercy to them that restore, and threatneth the

X

punish-

Prou. 3. 27.

1. Thes. 4. 6.

Zach. 5.
1. Cor. 6. 10.

Psal. 50. 18.

1. Thes. 4. 6.
Leuit. 19. 13. &
25. 27.

Esa. 1. 23.

Prou. 20. 14.
Deut. 25. 13. &
16.

Leuit. 6. 1.

Ezech. 18. 7, 12.

Gen. 43. 21.
 Luke 19. 8.
 1. Sam. 12. 3.
*St. Aug. in Epi.
 ad Mac. Dane-
 us in Eth. lib. 2.
 cap. 15.*
*Perkins in the
 pract. of Rep.*
 Prou. 3. 28.
 Mat. 5. 23.
 Leuit. 6. 5.
*Ioseph. antiq.
 lib. 4. cap. 8.*

Numb. 5. 7, 8.
 Read Exod. 21.
 19, 29, 30.
 Leuit. 24. 19.
 Exod. 21. 33,
 34, 36. & 22. 1.
 2. Sam. 12. 6.
 Deut. 22. 2.
 Exod. 22. 5, 6,
 14.
 Psal. 37. 21.
 2. King. 6. 5.
 Leuit. 6. 4.
 Deut. 22. 3.
 Leuit. 5. 16.
 Deut. 14. 22.
 Prou. 20. 25.
 Leuit. 27. 33.
 Mal. 1. 8, 13, 14.

punishment for not restoring. It is a Rule of-e-
 quirie and iustice that requireth it, which is, to
 giue euery one his owne; and the Law of nature,
 to doe as wee would be done vnto. Yea, we haue
 the practice of the godly to moue vs; the sonnes
 of *Iacob: Zacheus, and Samuel* offer it; If they had
 done wrong to any. Lastly, this is the iudgement
 of the godly Learned, that restitution should
 be made, affirming the sinne not to be remitted,
 except the thing taken away be restored: and also
 that Repentance is not found without it, if there
 bee ability to restore. Neither may this bee de-
 ferred, when it is in our hand, and when we come
 to worship before God: But we must restore the
 thing found, borrowed, or otherwise gotten, and
 not iustly beeing our owne, vnto the true owner
 himselfe, if we know him, or to his children, exe-
 cutors, or next kinsman; and if these bee not to
 bee found, then to God, for some publike vse to
 the Church, or reliefe of the poore. And this re-
 stitution must bee made by mee for euery wrong
 done to my brother, in body, either by my selfe,
 or by my beast; in his goods in like manner, by
 stealing, by eating their ground with my beasts,
 by burning, by borrowing and not repaying, by
 withholding what was deliuered to be kept of fi-
 delitie, by hiding cattell going astray, or keeping
 things found. Herein also may iustly be reckoned
 sacriledge, robbing of Churches, or Church-men
 of their maintenance allowed by God, and the
 good Lawes of our Land, by not tything, or ty-
 thing deceitfully. The labourer is worthy of his
 hire:

hire: let him enioy such maintenance as by Law is giuen him, and godly Ancestours truely intended him; and bee not guiltie of this spirituall theft, which the very heathen would not doe to their priests: for in the great famine of Egypt all the Egyptians lands and goods were bought and sold, but the lands of the Priests were not, but they did eate the portion which *Pharaoh* gaue them: but with vs men are of so greedy and more then heathenish appetite, that they can deuoure vp both land, and liuing, and rything, the whole Portion of Christs Ministers; so as these heathen shall rise vp in iudgement against these deuourers, which eate vp from the Lords Messengers what hath bin dedicated for the maintenance of his Seruice and Worship.

Gen. 47. 32.

Well, Let him doe the kinsmans part.] That is, I yeeld him his right in thee, because hee is before mee, as I haue said, neither will I take thee, except hee renounce his right in thee. *Boaz*, we see, seeketh not to gaine her to himselfe without consent, neither will abuse her, but honestly behaueth himselfe in the night with her alone, as in the eyes of men, and open view of the world: for a godly man is not good because of men, but for that he feareth God which looketh vpon him, and vpon whom hee looketh: and therefore euery where behaueth himselfe as hee ought. *Boaz* here loueth her, but lusts not after her to defile her, as some would, making it a sport to commit fornication, with those whom they thinke doe belong vnto others, either betroathed maids, or married wiues: but

Hcb. 13. 4.

whoremongers and adulterers God will iudge.

But if hee will not doe the part of a kin(man to thee.) These words Boaz vttereth as the ground of his promise to marry with *Ruth*, to wit, if hee the kinsman refuse her: for *when one renounceth his right, it is then free for another*: for the release made, is a setting free of that which before was tied, which is for direction to such as take houses, or grounds. It is a common complaint to say, He hath taken my house and my grounds from me: But often vniustly, as when the Lord letteth not lands or houses, but to a limited time, which being expired, the same is free to let to another, except either custome bind to let the present possessor to haue the refusall, or that some promise be made, which bindeth an honest man to keepe it. Beside this, there is indeed a friendly courtesie in the Land-Lord to offer to the present Inioyer that which hee hath, before any other; but he is not simply bound so to doe, but only of good wil. Yet must I needs acknowledge, that it is not a neighbourly part for any one out of a greedy couetousnesse, to vnder-myne the possessor, or by any indirect meanes to procure from him at the Land-Lords hands, his house or lands: for this is against the Law of loue, to doe as wee would be done vnto, and not to doe to others, what wee would not that they should doe vnto vs, as the Law and Prophets teach, and our Master Christ cōmandeth; and yet this is a common practice now for want of loue. Note againe how warie Boaz is in making her a promise to marry

marry with her, it is done cautelously, with condition of vpright dealing betweene him and another. For, *as euery promise is to be made of an honest man with due consideration, (because once made, it bindeth, except there be a release) so especially the promise of marrying one another;* both for the weightines of the matter (nothing being so much concerning the welfare, or downefall of man in this life) as also for the indissolublenesse of the knot; for here is no releasing one of another, but they must liue together till death. And therefore let vs learne to bee warie in making this match: and to doe this, first, consider these two things before mentioned, and weigh them well to preuent haste and rashnesse herein. Secondly, how fit or vnfit the marriage is, and what good reasons there be to perswade to it, or dissuade from it. Thirdly, what is required before the marriage to further it, or else which might hinder the same. We may not rashly, and vnaduisedly ruine into this holy ordinance, as many doe, first, vpon foolish, light, and vnaduised loue. Secondly, vpon strong and vnbridled lust, violently pressing them to sudden contracts, and often to filthy vncleanesse, like bruit beasts, which haue no vnderstanding. Thirdly, vpon a feare to lose the opportunitie of enioying one another, if friends should know it, therefore they will contract themselues, and giue themselues one to another, and that dishonestly, to force friends to consent. Fourthly, couetousnesse, when men are carried away, not with the loue of the partie, but with the greatnes

of a portion. These, and such like, make hastie matches, at leasure to be repented of. Here it may be demanded, *Why Boaz made an (if) of the other Kinsmans mind and good will, seeing first he was the highest Kinsman, and had secondly, the Law of God to mooue him thereto; was it not vncharitablenesse?* I answer, No: for hee knew not his kinsmans mind, as it appeareth by his triall of him the next day. Againe, hee knew well, that albeit nature and Religion tie men to doe a thing; yet worldlings will not doe their dutie. *Cain* had Nature, Reason, and Religion, to loue his brother *Abel*; so had *Saul* to respect *David*; but these preuailed with neither of them, no more then the Law here was offorce to mooue this worldling; for such a one he was, as shall be shewed in the next Chapter.

Then will I doe the part of a Kinsman to thee.] Boaz hauing laid downe the condition, he reneweth his promise made in vers. 11. yea, though the other refuse her, he will take her: *for one mans dislike, maketh not true loue to decay in another mans heart*: for true loue is fixed vpon the thing beloved, without respect to other mens affections to the same; their liking may the more increase loue, but dislike cannot viterly remove it, where it is firmly settled: this, experience telleth vs to bee true, in the loue of young persons affecting marriage. And it were to bee wished, that our loue were so strong, that our soules were so glued to Religion, that though others dislike, wee may not therefore cease to loue it, but bee as *Ruth* to *Naomi*,

Naomi, and so say, as she to her, though shee saw *Orpha* depart from her. Note againe, that albeit *Boaz* made this promise to her alone, and without other witnesses, but God onely; yet hauing promised, and sworne to keepe it, he after honestly and faithfully performes the same, as in the next Chapter is plaine: For, *an honest man will keepe his oath and his word*; as may be seene in the *Reubenites*, *Gadites*, and halfe Tribe of *Manasseh*, in *Jonathan* and *David*, in *Judah* with *Simeon*, in *Ioseph* to his brethren after *Iacobs* death, *Caleb* to *Othniel*, the Spies to *Rahab*, and to the man of *Bethel*: for an honest man hath a binding conscience, when the word is passed out of his mouth, he careth for his honest name and credit, which to him is more then riches, and better then oyntment. If therefore we be of vpright and honest dealing, and so would be accounted, let vs keepe our words and our othes: for this is common honesty, iustice, and a thing of good report, which we are commanded to haue care of. It is a marke of a good Christian, though it bee to our owne hinderance; wee shall be like the children of our heauenly Father, who faileth not of any thing which he speaketh. Without keeping promise, men cannot bee trusted; it cutteth off all commerce and traffique with men. Godly men haue euer made conscience of their word; and very heathen men haue been worthy of admiration in this point. And yet these things mooue nothing a number of base-minded, false-hearted, and dishonest Christians, vnworthy the name of

Chap. 1. 16.

Numb. 32. 27.
Iosh. 4. 12.
and 22. 30.
Iudg. 1. 3, 7,
12, 15.
Gen. 50. 21.
Iosh. 6. 23.
Iudg. 1. 25.

Phil. 4. 8.
Psal. 15. 4.

Iosh. 21. 45.
1. King. 8. 56.

such, when they lose their common honestie.

As the Lord liueth.] This is an oath, Ier. 4. 2. This oath hee taketh, because it was a matter of great importance, and for that he would put the poore woman out of all doubt, and that shee should not feare the accomplishment, though he was rich, and she poore; he noble, shee meane; he an Israelite, and she a stranger of *Moab*. From this note; First, that *it is lawfull to take an oath*, against the Anabaptists assertion, of which see Chap. 1. 17. Secondly, *That the godly vse to sweare by God*, when they sweare, and by none other; of this more at large also in chap. 1. 17. Thirdly, that the *forme of an oath is diuersly expressed, and not one manner of way*; as thus, *I speake it before God; God is my witnesse; The Lord knoweth; As the Lord liueth; I protest before the Lord; I call God to record*, and diuers such like, besides the common forme, *By God*, and so forth; which I note, to taxe the vsuall swearing of many, who seeme to hate swearing in the common forme, and yet they themselves sweare too often in another forme: so sub-till is Satan to beguile them in that, and therein to make them guiltie of that, from which they take themselves to be most free: but they be deceiued, for when God, or his name and attributes are at any time mentioned, for this end, to confirme the truth of that which a man speaketh, it is an oath. Let men take notice hereof, and cease to be common swearers. Fourthly, that *it is lawfull to sweare in priuat cases*, as *Jonathan* did to *David*, and he to *Jonathan*; the spies to *Rahab*, & *Boaz* here to *Ruth*,

Ruth, in case of necessitie, and in weightie matters. In such cases wee may vse our lawfull libertie, but yet with great warinesse, with great reuerence of the high Maiestie of God, not suddenly, not in passion, not without due aduise-
ment. Fifthly, that *an oath is the confirming of the mind of another in the truth of that which is spoken*, whether of things past, spoken, or done, or of things present, or of things to come, and promised to be done. This is the end of *Boaz* swearing here. If this be so, then let men rest satisfied with an oath, as *Ruth* doth here, and as in some cases God would haue men so to do, for it is the greatest confirmation of a truth that may bee, except the partie swearing either hath been conuincd, or is at that present conuincible, by good probabilities of falshood. If this be the end of an oath, then also let men care to sweare truly, that the mind of others may trust them, and relye vpon their faithfull oath taken. But we haue cause to bewaile these times, in which there bee such, as professing Christianitie, yet will vse oathes, yea, and fearefull execrations to coozen with, to make their lyes and secret villanies intended, to bee the lesse suspected, as by miserable experience some simple and plaine meaning men may speake, being deluded by faire shewes of godlinesse, zeale of goodnesse, words confirmed by oathes, fearefull execrations, and counterfeit letters, that wicked hypocrites and Satanicall deceiuers might attaine to their vnlawfull desires. Let men therefore take heed of men, and beware whom they trust,

Heb. 6. 16.

Exod. 22. 11.

trust, seeing men dare with pretence of godli-
nesse, goe so farre in detestable villanies: but I
wish him or them that practise it, to leaue it be-
times, else let them looke for deserued dōme,
without serious Repentance.

Lie down vntill the morning.] With these words
hee endeth his conference, not spending the
night in vaine or vnneccessary prattling, as idle lo-
uers and wanton suters will doe: but hauing an-
swered her request, and shewed to her his loue
and honest resolution, hee willeth her to lie
downe vntill the morning. By which words it
seemeth she was risen vp, as ready to depart, but
that hee would not permit her so to doe, for the
reasons before mentioned: and because the night
is ordained for rest, as the Psalmist saith: *At
night man goeth to his rest.* Neither is it safe for
young women to bee abroad in the night, it sa-
uoureth not well, it befitteth not their sex, & may
endanger their chastitie. Wee must beware of
beeing Night-walkers: for Satan the prince of
darkenesse will then be the most busie. Such also
as hate the Light, loue to be in darkenesse, as the
theefe, & the adulterer. Againe, the night imbol-
deneth to al villanie and wickednes, which in the
day time they will not dare to doe, as may bee
seene in the Sodomites, and Gibeonites. Lastly,
Night-walkers haue euer beene suspected for ill-
disposed persons.

Iob 24.15.

Gen. 19.

Iud. 19. 22, 25.

Verse

Verse 14. *And shee lay at his feet untill the morning: and shee rose up before one could know another: for hee said, Let it not bee knowne, that a woman came into the floore.*

THis verse sheweth how *Ruth* rested till the morning: then, her rising ready to depart; with the mouing cause from *Boaz* speech, being a wary Caucat vnto her.

And shee lay at his feet untill the morning.] This is added, to shew their chaste and continēt behaviour: for if they had offended, the holy Ghost, who spared not *Noahs* drunkenesse, *Lots* incest, *Dauids* adultery, would not haue concealed this fact, if so they had thereof been guilty: They were both honest and feared God: and therefore they would not commit such wickednesse, albeit they had occasion offred. Whereby wee may learne, that where the feare of God and honesty beareth sway, there chastity may bee preserved, though occasion bee offered to the contrary. Behold this here in old *Boaz*, and elsewhere in young *Ioseph*; there was neither lechery in the one, nor strength of lust, nor youthfull wantonnesse in the other: for there lust is bridled, where the feare of God possesseth the heart, and honesty lodgeth. To bee kept therefore from this euill, let these vertuous examples guide vs, that lust ouer-beare vs not, as it doth in such as seeke occasions to sinne in this kind: *neighing*, as *Ieremie* speaketh, *after their neighbours wiuues*. And such also, though they seeke not occasion,

1. COR. 10. 32.

sion, like the former; yet they easily take occasion to offend this way, with virgins, with married wiues, and with those whom they thinke to marry with; and this last is held no offence at all by them: because they thinke that marriage amendeth all. But first it is an argument of a strong and vnbridled lust, which should not beare rule in Christians. Secondly, if the man hap to die before marriage, (as who is certaine of life?) the woman being with child, becommeth infamous, and shee that should haue beene a wife, is left as an harlot. Thirdly, it is an offence to the Church, being knowne, and punishable by the same, which offence the godly must auoid: *Give no offence, (saith the Apostle) to Iew, nor Gentile, nor to the Church of God.* Fourthly & lastly, it becometh not the holinesse of the publicke solemnization of marriage, to which the parties should come vndefiled, as the Assembly and Congregation of God doe in charitie iudge of them. Nore besides, that these two godly persons kept themselves chaste, and how others accounted also godly, and that so were, yet were very fowly ouertaken in this sinne of the flesh, as wee haue example in *Lot* in a caue with his daughters; *Iudah* with *Tamar*; and *Dauid* with *Bathsheba*. From whence obserue, that *Gods owne deare Children* haue not all the like measure of grace, nor power to resist temptations, and to subdue their owne corruptions. In the holy Word of God wee shall find three sorts of the godly: some hardly found fault with, their infirmities passed ouer with silence; such a one

one was *Isaac*, *Boaz* heere, so *Iosua*, *Samuel*, *Daniel*, *Mephibosheth*, *Ionathan*, *Zacharie* and *Elizabeth*, *Simeon*, *Anna*, the *Virgin Mary*, and others. Some are noted with their frailties and light infirmities, being most excellent Saints of God, as *Moses*, *Iob*, *Jeremie*, *Hezechias*, and *Iosias*, and some others. A third sort are stained with soule offences, as *Dauid* with adulterie and murther; *Iudab* with incest, and so *Lot*; *Aaron* with Idolatry; and *Peter* with periurie: for the Lord affordeth not the like grace in equall measure vnto all. All are sanctified: yet corruptions more sway in one then in another, as these instances shew, and as experience daily teacheth. Therefore let vs not thinke to find the like grace in all, and the like mortification of corruption: for God distributeth his gifts and the measure, as it pleaseth him. None are then to bee condemned simply for bad persons, as if they were not in the number of Gods Saints; because they bee not in all things like their brothren: for they, euen both sorts of them may bee the Lords, and yet in some thing bee very much vnlike. *Ioseph* inticed by his mistresse, preserued his chastitie: but *Dauid* inticed another mans wife, and lay with her. *Boaz* alone with *Ruth* would not sinne in fornication: but *Lot* alone with his daughters committed incest. *Nathaniel* was a true Israelite without guile: but *Iacob* first called *Israel*, of whom came all the Israelites, dissembled, & lyed to his owne father: *Moses* a meeke man, but *Jonah* of a very froward spirit: and yet al of them good men, & the blessed Saints

Gal. 6. 1.

Saints of God. This therefore iustly reproveth those, who seeing men professing Religion, and yet to differ in their courses, some to live vnreprouably, and others to giue great offence in their falls, though of infirmitie, doe vtterly condemne them all as hypocrites, and as dissemblers. Yea, this checketh them themselues for deadly censuring one another, when if any man be overtaken in any fault: they which be spirituall, should restore such an one in the spirit of meeknesse, considering themselues, lest they also be tempted. If any man heere aske, *Why doth not God make all his Children to be alike religiously minded one as well as another?* I answer, the Lord may doe it for these reasons. First, for the good many times of the godly themselues: for they are suffered to fall for their greater humiliation, the more to let them see their owne weaknesse, to shew that they stand not of themselues; to make them the more to deny themselues, not to bee lifted vp with any conceit of their owne goodnesse, or merit; but to magnifie Gods mercy for their daily preservation, and for his goodnesse towards them: and after their fall returning to God, and feeling peace in their renewed Repentance, they will the more closely sticke to God, more earnestly pray, and more seruently loue him: for so great good the Lord workes in his Children after their falls; yea such humiliation will bee wrought thereby in them; and such comfort, ioy, and loue in God after their recouerie, as no outward crosses, nor outward deliuerances can euer doe the like.

like. Secondly, for the further damnation of the wicked, who at the falls of the godly doe harden their hearts the more against all Religion, thinking it to bee a vaine thing, and that such as follow and embrace it, are no better than others, and that the best be but hypocrites: because they see some grievously overtaken; when these miserable soules should hereby be moued the more to feare their owne damnation, except they repent and take a better course: for if the righteous scarcely bee saued; if they so hardly get out of their corruptions; if they bee so fearefully overtaken, who reade, meditate, heare the Word, conferre thereof, pray much, and humble themselves with teares; where shall the wicked and sinner appeare? How can the common and carelesse Christian bee saued? Thus should they reason, to rowze vp their spirits to make them to seeke God, and feare damnation, and not take occasion by the falls of some, to condemne the profession of Religion it selfe in others, and so to make no account thereof in themselves to the hardning of their owne hearts, and so heaping vpon themselves the iust deserued vengeance.

1. Pet. 4. 18.

And she rose vp, before one could know another.]
That shee might bee gone away out of the floore before the light, or at the dawning of the day, very earely, ere others should bee stirring. This shee did perhaps out of a ioy of heart, and desire to bee with *Naomi*, to tell her the successe of her counsell, which she carefully followed, as it may seeme by her hasty relation of the matter vnto her

Gen. 22. 3. and
28. 18.

Iofua 7. 16.

1. Sam. 17. 20.

her mother in law, when shee came vnto her, as shall bee shewed in the 16. verse. Note heere, that *they bee not drowzie-headed, whose hearts are taken vp with their businesse*: they can rise betimes, and preuent the day, whether it bee the desire of getting goods, or enioying pleasure, or to doe mischief, which makes some not to rest: or that it bee such ioy as was heere in *Ruth*; or a good will to doe a thing, as in *Abraham* to obey God, hee arose vp early; so *Jacob* to get to his Vncles; *Iofua* to find out the transgressour in the excommunicate thing, to put euill away from Israel; *Dauid* to go with that which his father sent vnto the hoast. So that let the heart be taken vp with loue, care, ioy, desire, it will doe any thing; the spirit of drowziness will bee shaken off: for it is the carelesse minde which maketh slothfull. To bee therefore stirring, and to raise vp our selues out of the bed of idlenesse, wee must set our hearts vpon our affaires. I might also note, how *darkenesse keeps vs from the knowledge of one another*: therefore in darkenesse man feareth not the face of man, and so is bold to doe euill; because hee is hid from the sight of others: and as it is in bodily darkenesse, so in spirituall, the ignorant and blind in soule dare do any thing, they blush not, neither be they ashamed, which others enlightened are afraid to commit; neither can they discern one another: for the light of Truth they haue not. But yet though men can bee hid in darkenesse from men, they cannot bee so from God.

For

For hee said, (or as others reade) And hee said, Let it not bee knowne that a woman came into the floore.] If you reade *For*, it is a reason from Boaz his speech of her so soone rising; if *And*, then it is his admonition to her, that beeing risen, shee should so get her into the city, that others might not know that they were alone together in the floore that night. Howsoever it bee read, Boaz herein sheweth his care of his & her honest name and credit, which might hereby bee brought into suspition, albeit their consciences had told them, that they had done nothing worthy blame, for any act of dishonestie. From hence let vs note, First, that *it neuer was, neither yet is a matter of good report, but a suspicion rather of euill, for a man and a woman to be taken together alone in places vnfit, vnusuall, and at times vnseasonable.* This the words of Boaz doe plainely heere giue vs to vnderstand: for man is so apt to this sinne of the flesh; yea the best, without especial grace, as light occasions breed suspicions: because also men are not so charitable as they should bee, if any least shew of euill may seeme to bee giuen this way. Therefore let such as would not bee suspected, beware how they be in company alone together, when and where suspicions may arise. Secondly, that *it is not enough to haue our consciences cleare before God, but our selues cleare of giuing iust suspicion of euill, before men.* This was Boaz his care, and Saint Pauls: for it is not enough to haue a good conscience within, but we must haue care of our good name, to be well reported of abroad; which

Acts 24. 16.

2. Cor. 8. 21.

Prou. 22. 1.
Ecclef. 7. 1.
Hebr. 11. 2, 39.
3. John 12.

1. Pet. 2. 12.

1. Cor. 10. 31.
& 12. 13.

Esaï. 3. 9.
Ier. 6. 15. & 8.
12.

is an excellent thing, better then riches, then oymntment. And this the godly will endeavour to obtaine, to stop the mouthes of aduersaries, that they may bee put to rebuke, and to procure glory to the Gospell which they doe professe. This being our duetie, then are they reproveable which make no conscience of offence before men: because, say they, our hearts condemne not vs, wee know wee doe not what men suspect: when yet the Apostle forbids offences, and to looke to expediencie, and not simply to the lawfulnessse of a thing, and to auoid all appearances of euill. There are another sort worse than these, who are so farre from auoiding suspition of euill, as they are not ashamed of the euill it selfe, being past shame, and dare openly boast of their lewdnesse, without blushing, of which both *Esaï* and *Ieremie* doe complaine.

Verse 15. *Also hee said, Bring the vaile that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when shee held it, hee measured six measures of Barley, and laid it on her: and shee went into the Citie.*

Here is *Boaz* his liberality and testimonie of loue, noting wherein it was receiued, what and how much hee gaue, his helping her vp with it to conuay and carry it away. And lastly, his and her departure into the citie.

Also hee said,] Boaz his former speech was for her credit, but this is for her comfort; the former stood in words, but this in a good work of mercy.

A

A good mans loue appeareth in word and in deed, in good counsell, and in good works of comfort also This sheweth loue to bee perfect, not feigned; this is to follow the Apostle *Iohn* his exhortation, not to loue in word and tongue onely, but in deed and in truth: so loued *Boaz*, and so doe all blessed men loue. If therefore the loue of worke bee wanting, and onely the loue of word, it is counterfeit loue, and Saint *Iames* reiecteth it, as no loue.

1.Iohn 3.18.

Iam.2.

Bring the vaile that thou hast vpon thee, and hold it. He tooke occasion from this loose vaile, to bestow corne vpon her: for a good man, in his willingness to do good, will take the smallest occasiō to shew it. This word *vaile* in another place is translated *manile*. It was a loose garment cast vpon her, to keepe her warme, and to couer her in the night. There was vsed also among them another vaile for the day, to throw ouer their heads and faces for modestie sake: such an one had faire *Rebecca*, whose modestie may condemne the wanton going of our women, who yet come short of *Rebecca* for beauty. I wish also they were not more short of her for honesty. The Arabian women, yea & so the heathen Romane women went couered, as doe now the women in Spaine, not halfe naked, as many harlotries doe now in England, to the shame of Religion, and disgrace of the Gospell, hauing both heathen and Papists to condemne them. But what care such for the Gospell, which want grace? or for Religion, which are of none at all, and neuer yet had their consciences bound

Esa.3.22.

Gen.24.65.

to the obedience thereof, but liue as Libertines, doing what they list, walking after the lust of their owne hearts.

And when shee held it.] This implieth some stay till shee had folded it, to receiue his kindnesse: for *he that mindeth truly to doe the poore good, can bee content to stay till they can bee ready to receiue it.* Boaz was not like such as seeme to be willing to giue the poore a penny, and yet will be gone before hee can open his purse to change the nig-gards siluer: so they blame his not readinesse to receiue what they onely pretended, but neuer from heart intended: so lewdly deluding the poore. Boaz had shewed her great kindnesse before, which shee receiued, and now hee offers her this mercy againe, which shee refuseth not. For *it is no unmannerlinesse, nor disgrace, to take kindnesse offred of friends, though the parties before haue beene chargeable, and haue often receiued of their bountie;* so long as the one sort be able, and voluntarily doe giue, and the other bee poore, and not importunate yet standing in need to receiue: for pouerty is a heauie burthen, and may iustly make excuse for them. And therefore such are not to bee blamed, which do not refuse the often offred bounties of friends: but indeed, such as need not, and will bee chargeable to frank-hearted friends, such are basely couetous, and deserue reproofe, rather then to haue their desire.

Hee measured six measures of Barley.] Boaz had giuen much before by his seruants: now, by his owne hand: yet not at randome, taking out of
the

the heape, hee knew not what; but he measured that to her which hee gaue her. Whence note from his person still giuing vnto *Ruth*, and in her to *Naomi*: that a liberall and mercifull heart is not weary of well-doing. *Cornelius* a good and deuout man, gaue daily much almes vnto the poore: for his soule delighteth in mercy and workes of charity, and desiring to bee rich in good workes, as the Apostle exhorteth. These examples let vs imitate and follow, wee must not bee wearie of wel-doing; and if we haue faith, we will shew forth good workes, if it bee liuely and not dead faith. They are therefore reprocable, who bee wearie of well-doing; they would giue once, but not often, neither at any time much: and yet wee beg bread at Gods hands daily, and repine if wee haue it not, and not onely for the present, but for the time to come. It is noted of *Titus Vespasian*, that hee thought he had lost that day, in which he had not performed some office of beneficence. Few Christians think as this Heathen thought: for then would our great men giue more, and spend lesse vainely, that the poore might fare the better. Another sort are heere faultie, who continue to giue now and then, but are loth to encrease their liberality, as God encreaseth his bounty in mercy towards them: for if they grow rich, it is hee that giueth them power to get riches. The third sort are such as turne their loue wholly to themselues, and thinke all little enough for themselues, and that through base couetousnesse, being neuer satisfied, so as

Y 3 they

1. Tim. 6.

2. Thef. 3. 13.
Gal. 6. 9, 10.
Iam. 2.

Sueton. Tit.

Deut. 8. 18.
Osee 12. 8.

they liue of vsurie and oppression, getting from others what they can; or through an aspyring spirit, getting goods to grow great in the world; or else of a vaine vnthrifitie humour of spending, can spare nothing to giue to the poore; because his consuming guests, (which euer lodge with him) whoredome, drunkenesse, pride, and loue of play, doe keepe him still so bare of money. Another lesson may we learne hence, frō Boaz his manner of giuing by measure, and not hand ouer head, as wee say, without discretion, that *Liberality is not lauish of Gods blessings, giuing in iudgemēt, and not without consideration*: for euery vertue either is, or should be guided with prudence. This discretion in Boaz is commendable; and they that will consider what they giue, before they giue, in so doing, are not to be reprobued.

And laid it on her.] See how a willing Giuer doth not onely bestow a benefis, but helpeth the party if need be, to receiue the same: & so doth Boaz here; and so doth also our gracious God in giuing his blessings to vs. If wee then bee willing to doe a good turne, and to bestow a fauour vpon any, let vs not bee wanting in any needfull thing, to further our owne liberalitie towards them: for this will shew, that what wee giue, wee giue with all our hearts vnto them.

And she went into the citie.] Our last Translation is, *shee went*: but it should be *hee*, as the Hebrew word will make good, and the testimony of the Learned in that tongue: both went into the citie, *shee* to her mother, as the next words in the Story

Story do shew, which by reason of the continuation and series of the narration, maketh it seeme most likely that *shee* went into the city, as it is commonly translated; and *he* likewise went into the city to dispatch the businesse, and to do what hee had promised to *Ruth*, as it is cleare in the next Chapter. By thus reading it, and by considering how *Boaz* before could lye downe by the corne, but now out of his affection to marry with *Ruth*, can leaue all, to finish that businesse, wee may learne, that *loue is impatient of delay, and maketh a man to lay aside other cares, to enioy his beloued.* Concerning the force of this affection, see it in *Samson* to the maiden of *Timnah*; in *Iacob* to *Rachel*; and in *Sichem* to *Dinah*: for loue winneth the whole man, and captiuateth his thoughts to the partie beloued, as may also be seen in *Samsons* inordinate loue to *Delilah*; and in *Amnon* to *Tamar*. Seeing this affection is so strong, let vs labour to bridle it, that it rule not ouer vs for the world or the flesh; and for this end let vs set it vpon better things worthy our loue to the utmost, euen on spirituall and heavenly things, vpon *Christ*, as the Spouse in the Canticles did, and *Saint Paul*; on his Word, as *Dauid*; on his Church, as *Moses* did; and on the appearing of *Iesus Christ* for our finall deliuerance, as all should: thus to fixe our loue, will make it holy, and our selues happy.

Iud. 14. 2, 3.
Gen. 29. 20, 30.
and 34. 3, 8,
12, 19.

Iud. 16. 4, 16.
2. Sam. 13. 2, 4.

Col. 3. 1.
Cant. 1. 2, 3, 7,
and 2. 14.
Psal. 119.
Heb. 11.
2. Tim. 4. 8.

Verse 16. *And when shee came to her mother in law, shee said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done vnto her.*

Ruths returne from the floore to Naomi, where a question is asked and answered, with a full relation of all that which had happened.

And when she came to her mother in law.] Ruth hauing sped, as you heare, and receiued such kindnesse for the present, and such hope for the time to come, home she goeth with a glad heart, and that without delay; shee hath not her by-walkes, but hauing done what shee went about, according to the aduice of Naomi, shee, as I said, returneth home againe. Three things might moue Ruth to hasten home: the danger of the way, being so carely before day; the burthen which shee bare vpon her backe, to bee eased thereof; and her ioy to impart to her mother her happy successe. As these made her hie home, and to desire to bee with her mother: so should the like make vs desirous to bee at our home in Heauen: first, the danger we be in, while here we liue in this darke world; then, the burthen of sinne, which wee doe beare, of which we should be weary, and grone till wee bee deliuered: and thirdly, our inward ioy conceiued of our future happinesse for euer and for euer.

Who art thou, my daughter?] So Naomi speaketh, because it was not yet day, that shee might know

know her, and therefore asketh who shee was. It may seeme by this, that *Naomi* her house was neither bolted nor barred, *Ruth* comming in so easily, and *Naomi* not knowing, who it was at the first: for poore folkes need feare no robbing.

And shee told her all that the man had done unto her.] That is, shee related all his kind speeches, and his promise of marrying of her, if the other kinsman did refuse her, as appeareth by *Naomi* her speech in the 18. verse: so that *done* is here put for his word and promise which should be done: which argueth her perswasion that he would doe it. And it is an excellent promise of a man to be held so faithfull, that his promise may bee said to bee done, for the certaintie thereof before it bee done. A rare vertue in these daies, euen among those that would be held no common Protestants. Where almost is hee, of whom it might be said, when he hath promised, that it is done: where is mans faithfulness become? Mint, Annise, and Cummine is stood vpon; but iudgement, mercy, and faith, the weightier matters of the Law are omitted. *Naomi* asketh *Ruth* who she was? Who answereth not to that, but forthwith relateth *Boaz* his kindnesse with which her mind was taken vp: for we speedily relate such things as our hearts be delighted in, and much taken vp with: for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, whether it be cause of ioy or sorrow. If then wee would speake of a matter, let our hearts bee affected therewith; that will make vs speake readily, and neglect other conference: many cannot speake of

God

God nor Religion; and some that can, will not, desire not: the reason is, their hearts are not affected therewith; for if they were, they would be very ready to speake thereof.

Verse 17. *And shee said, These sixe measures of Barley gaue hee mee: for hee said to mee, Goe not emptie vnto thy mother in law.*

THe last words of *Ruth* in this Booke, as here to *Naomi* also, shewing who it was that gaue the corne, and for whose sake.

And she said, These sixe measures of Barley gaue hee me.] Before, *Ruth* telleth of his good words; and here shee sheweth his good workes: for good words and good workes euer concurre where true loue is, else it is feigned: of which I haue spoken before. In that *Ruth* doth bring home all that which was giuen to her mother, and kept nothing backe, to buy her selfe any necessaries, by making sale thereof, it teacheth children honestie: for honest children will not rob their parents of any thing, as *Micah* did, who stole eleuen hundred shekles of siluer from his mother, which caused her bitterly to curse him, till it was restored to her againe. Good children will not doe so wickedly, though other thinke it no transgression, as *Salomon* speaketh.

Iud. 17. 1, 2.

Prou. 28. 24.

For he said to me, Goe not emptie vnto thy mother in law.] *Ruth* telleth why *Boaz* was so liberall, not for her sake onely, but for *Naomi* her sake also, and that chiesely in this kindnesse to her. *Ruth* taketh

taketh not this to her selfe, concealing *Boaz* his
 louing respect to *Naomi*, as if all had beene done
 in fauour of her owne selfe, bringing it to *Naomi*
 as a token of her loue to her, thereby thinking to
 bind her the more vnto her by that office: but
 presenting it as a fauour from *Boaz* vnto her also,
 relateth the truth of the thing as it passed. By
 which wee may obserue, that *true and honest*
minds are iust in all their relations, in that which
 they doe know, without colour, without deceit:
 for they loue truth, and doe speake it from sim-
 plicitie of heart, which is the propertie of the
 godly, and which wee must labour for. Againe,
the true and honest-minded seeke not to procure fa-
uour and thanks by that which is the bountie of ano-
ther, as many doe in distributing the almes and
 beneuolence of others, as if it were from them-
 selues, seeking to reape that which they sowed
 not, and to receiue, which they deserue not.
 Thirdly note, that *Boaz* forgets not *Naomi* ab-
 sent: for a faithfull friend is mindfull of such as hee
 loueth, though absent. *Ebedmelech* the Morian lo-
 ued *Ieremie*, he therefore forgot him not, though
 out of sight, out of the Court, and now in a mise-
 rable prison, but went boldly to the King for
 him, and reprobued the Lords and Princes open-
 ly for doing that wrong to *Ieremie*. *Darius* affe-
 cted *Daniel*, and therefore could not be vnmind-
 full of him. This is true friendship, and not like
 the loue of such, of whom it may bee said, Out of
 sight, out of minde, like the vnkind and forget-
 full Butler of *Pharaoh*, who for a long space for-
 got

Psal. 15. 2.

Ier. 38. 9.

Dan. 6.

got innocent *Ioseph*, who interpreted to him his dreame in prison, and that to his great comfort: of whom he also prayed to be remembred, when he came to his place againe; but the Butler was so glad of his owne prosperity, that hee had no mind to thinke of *Iosephs* aduersitie. Such is the loue of men, too common in these dayes; much kindnesse in shew to mens faces, but if the backe be once turned, loue is likewise turned, and quite vanished away.

Verse 18. *Then said shee, Sit still, my daughter, untill thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not bee in rest, untill hee haue finished the thing this day.*

N*aomi* her last words to *Ruth*, noted in this Story, being an exhortation: in which is to bee obserued, to what, how long, and the reason why.

Then said shee, Sit still, my daughter.] *Naomi* hauing heard and scene such testimony of *Boaz* his loue, and knowing his honest nature and true affection, shee exhorteeth *Ruth* to sit still, that is, to bee of a quiet mind, waiting with patience the issue. The words are figuratiue, and translated from the action of the body, to the action of the mind. By this that *Naomi* willeth her to bee quiet in mind, and without feare, and restlesnesse of spirit; wee may learne, that there is an unquietnesse of minde in euery one naturally to haue that affected, which the heart longeth after, as may be scene

scene in *Boaz*, as before is noted; so in *Jacob* to see *Joseph*, when he heard that hee was aliue; in *Abrahams* seruant, in procuring and bringing home a wife to *Isaac*; in the *Israelites*, seeking to punish the *Gibeonites*, for the villanie committed vpon the *Leuites* wife: and as in good, so also is the heart restles in seeking to bring euill to passe: for the wicked cannot rest, till they haue done euill. See this in *Delilah*, in hope of money, to betray *Samson* into the hands of the *Philistims*; and in *Iudas*, to deliuer Christ to his Enemies; and in *Abshalom*, to get the Kingdome from his father. Which earnestnesse ariseth sometime of feare, as *Ruths* here fearing to faile of her desire; sometime of couetousnesse and desire of gaine, as in *Iudas* and *Delilah*; of malice and desire of reuenge, as in the *Scribes* and *Pharises*, Enemies of Christ; of ioy and gladnesse, as in *Abrahams* seruant; of an aspyring and vaine-glorious humour, as in *Abshalom*; of loue and affection to one, as in *Sichem* to *Dinah*. By this then may wee see, whence it is that men pursue their pleasures, profits, honors, and their desires in that which they goe about so eagerly, euen because they haue their hearts fixed thereupon: and on the contrary, why people so little follow after godlinesse, so much neglect it, euen for that their hearts are farre from it. Thus may wee leame to iudge of our selues, and thus wee lay open our selues to be iudged of others.

[Vnill thou know how the matter will fall.] As if shee had said, Thou hast done thy part, the issue

Gen. 45. 4, 28.

Gen. 24. 13, 56.

Iud. 20. 1, 18.

19, 24, 28.

Iudg. 16.

is

Esa. 28. 16.

Psal. 37. 5.

Psal. 37. 3.

Gen. 24.

EXO. 17. 11, 12.

is in Gods hands, which thou must waite for with patience: for *when wee haue done, what on our behalfe is to be done, then are we to rest in the expectation of the issue, as Naomi aduiseeth Ruth heere.* So must we waite on God, trust in him, and commit our wayes vnto him, as we bee exhorted: but yet in well-doing, and in the exercise of Prayer, as Isaac did for good successe to his fathers seruant, when hee went to get a wife for him; and as Moses did for the victory, when the Israelites fought against the Amalekites.

For the man will not be in rest, till he haue finished the thing.] Naomi her reason to perswade Ruth to rest, and not to let her thoughts trouble her, nor to feare by delay to bee deceiued of her expectation; because Boaz would not rest, till hee himselfe had done what she desireth. *An approved truth of a man in one thing, may make certaine the truth of his word in another.* It is equitie and charity to hope well, where wee haue good prooffe of a mans faithfulness: and this is true credit, when a mans word is become of that force and validitie, as it maketh another to beleue him without doubting. Such was Boaz his credit with Naomi: and this is it which likewise shee would, and doth perswade Ruth vnto. This is the credit which wee must labour for, and which wee may attaine vnto, if wee feare God, and be faithfull to him (for false to God, will proue faithlesse to man) if we bee discret and wise in our words, to know what wee promise, before wee make it; if wee care to keepe euer our word in
the

the least thing; if we hate lying, and such as doe make lies, we shall procure credit to our word. And heere let such as find men carefull of their word, be like *Naomi*, in trusting and not wronging them, by calling their word into question without cause at any time, when they are knowne to haue euer approued theselues for honest men: for what greater iniury can be offred to an honest man euer meaning well, and carefull to keepe his word, then to bee suspected of the breach of his word vniustly? A true-hearted man taketh that iniurie very tenderly: and therefore let men beware of giuing offence in this kind, by entertaining vniust and vncharitable thoughts towards such as deserue it not.

CHAP. IIII.



His Chapter is the last of the Booke; and the last part of the Historie: for the first sheweth how *Ruth* came to Bethlehem; the second, how she behaued herselfe when she came there: the third, her contract with *Boaz*. And this, the solemnization of the marriage: where is declared what went before, and how it was effected; then the marriage it selfe, and the great applause of the people and Elders thereto. Thirdly, the happy issue thereof in the conception and birth of *Obed*. And lastly, a Genealogie from *Pharez* vnto *Dauid*, the King and Prophet of Israel, and the
type

type of Iesus Christ, who according to the flesh sprung from his loynes.

Verse 1. Then Boaz went up to the gate, and sate him downe there: and behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake, came by, vnto whom he said, Ho, such a one: turne aside, sit downe heere. And he turned aside and sate downe.

Psal. 126. 5, 6.

Iob 5. 11.

BOAZ prosecuteth the matter intended: and here is shewed, when, where, how, and with whom hee had to doe about it. Before I come to the words, note generally, that though both *Naomi* and *Ruth* had tasted of a poore and low estate, yet were they now exalted and greatly comforted, so as now no more *Marah*, but, as before, *Naomi*: for after humiliation, in time followes exaltation, after sowre sweet, and after mourning ioy. Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord deliuereth them out of all. *Israel* may go into bondage in *Egypt*, but they shal returne triumphing. *Ioseph* shal be tried, before he stand before *Pharaoh*; & *Dauid*, before he be settled in his Throne; and *Moses*, before hee bee the Princely Leader of the *Israelites*: and when thus they haue tasted of the sowre, assure themselues they shall feelee the sweete with ioy, as both *Naomi* and *Ruth* doe heere: for the Lord will at length set vp on high those that be low, that those which mourne, may be exalted in safety. The Lord will humble his, to make them see themselues, to try their loue, their patience and faith, and to fir them for his blessings,

blessings, that they may know how well to vse
 them, before they enioy them; and then will hee
 afford them their hearts desire, and make them
 merry and glad with the ioy of his countenance.
 Therefore after humiliation look for exaltation:
 this will worke comfort vnder the crosse, and
 make vs patiently awaite the time of our de-
 liuerance.

Then went Boaz.] That is, that morning, not
 deferring what he had promised, Chap. 3. 11, 13.
 where I spoke of the keeping of his word, which
 here he accomplished. See there this truth, that
an honest man will bee carefull to keepe his word:
 which here I will no farther insist vpon. Note fur-
 ther, that *what is done with the heart, is done cheere-*
fully and speedily. Boaz goeth about this without
 delay; yea so did *Abraham* in a matter of rare
 obedience, yea he rose vp betimes early in the
 morning to sacrifice his sonne: for what the heart
 is wonne vnto, there the whole man is set on
 worke; if *Sichems* heart cleaue to *Dinah*, he will
 not deferre the matter, to bee circumcized, that
 he may enioy the desire of the heart. By this may
 we discover whether the heart goe with a busi-
 nesse, if it be done cheerefully and speedily, the
 heart is with it; if but slowly, and without a lacri-
 ty, the heart is absent, as in many which come so
 to the Church, and being come, sit as dead, with-
 out any liuelynesse, because their hearts are
 elsewhere.

Vnto the gate.] The Gate was the place of iudge-
 ment, as a many places in Scripture shew. Now

Z

why

Gen. 22.

Gen. 34. 3. 19.

a Gen. 34. 20.
 Deut. 17. 5.
 and 21. 19. and
 22. 15, 24. and
 25. 7.
 Prou. 31. 23.
 Ios 20. 4.
 Iob 29. 7.

why it was there, these may bee the reasons. First, for easie accessse of all sorts, as well strangers as Inhabitants to the place of iustice, from which none are to be kept backe. In open places is the more roome. Secondly, for the better manifestation of iustice in the sight & hearing of all, which taketh away suspicion of iniustice. Thirdly, for the preuenting of thronging by the concourse of of people, not wholesome, and sometime dangerous in those hoat countries. Fourthly, that such as passed to and fro, might bee called into the businesse, either as witnesses, or parties sometime, as it fell out in this Session here with the kinsman comming at vnawares. Fifthly, because the gates be the strength and munition of the Citie: now, there for Magistrates to sit, doth more grace their authority, who sit there as Commanders in the place, able to command the whole Towne. Sixtly and lastly, to put all that enter into the City, in mind of well-doing, and to take heed of euill. These bee my coniectures: but whatsoeuer the reason was, this may wee learne, that *publicke causes are for publicke places, and there to bee determined of:* for in such cases the Lord commandeth to goe vp to the gate of the Citie; as also it was the manner of the Heathen thereabouts, so to doe. It befiteth the cause, it preuenteth suspicion of sinister dealing in priuate; and publicke places doe grace more authority, then priuate meetings. And therefore this course is to be approued, and the private hearing of publicke businesse, as in criminall causes,

is

Deut. 21. 19.
& 22. 15. & 17.
5. and 25. 7.
Gen. 34. 20.

is against the Apostles Canon: and hereby great euils fall out; iustice is preuerted, and sinne often vnpunished, the offenders let goe for gaine, who should bee made examples, that other might heare and feare.

Deut. 21. 21.

And [ate him downe there.] Seates were prepared before, for him and the rest, as the common place of iustice: which sitting downe of him in the publicke place of iustice, sheweth that he was a Iudge and a man of authority, and the best also in the Assembly, because he tooke the first place. Note briefly, First, that *sitting is the grauest gesture for Iudges and Magistrates in places of iudgement*; so euer set out, Prou. 31. 23. Mat. 19. 28. Reu. 20. 4. and so euer vsed in those parts, and likewise with vs: which therfore is to bee obserued for the better setting forth of their authority, which they should mind to grace by all meanes in the peoples eyes, for more reuerence sake. Secondly, that *God so guideth by his prouidence these worldly estates, that euer some are better men in place and dignitie then other some*: such a one was Iob, and so Boaz heere, for the preservation of peace in Church and Common-wealth: which hand of God wee are to prayse him for, and to pray vn-to him to vphold this inequality of persons: for else what would follow but disorder and confusion, and euery man would doe what hee list. See this with our selues, when men of equality meet, and haue light occasions offered: Oh how doe they scornefully behaue themselves one to another! Thirdly, that *men of place according to*

Iob 1. 1. & 29.
7, 8, 9.

Iud. 17. 6. and
18. 1.

their dignitie, may take their place, without staine of pride: for Boaz doth it: it is also their right, and it preferueth order, and that dignitie which God hath giuen them. Therefore may they take their place, yet so, as they be humble, and not hautily-minded, neither proudly contend for it, and so disturbe publicke peace, which should euer bee most deare to euery one, especially to men in authority. If men may take their place, then such are blame-worthy, which with an enuious eye find fault with any for so doing: and they also doe amisse, which out of too great humility (to speake but so of it) doe lose their due place, and therewithall so much of due respect vnto their person and degree, yeelding their place to the lesse worthy, and so lift vp the other in pride, and make themselues of lesse esteeme. But as there be some such so lowly-minded, so are there others too highly-conceited of themselues, who will take place of their betters, assuming to themselues more then they deserue: this is pride and hatefull arrogancie.

Chap. 3. 12, 13.

And behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake, came by.] This word of attention, *Behold*, calleth the Reader to a remarkeable thing, and to an especiall prouidence of God, in bringing this kinsman thus hither; not as yet called, or sent for. If hee had beene sent for, or called, and so come of purpose, it seemeth, the Holy Ghost would not haue said, *Behold*. This then was the guiding hand of God, to further this match. Whence wee doe learne, that *when God will prosper a businesse, his prouidence*

providence will apparantly bee seene in that businesse, and in the succeſſe thereof, as you may ſee before in Boaz his comming into the field, and Ruths lighting vpon his Reapers; ſo in Abrahams ſervant guided to Labans houſe, and in Rebecca, her comming out whileſt he prayed ſtanding by the Well, and ſhee performing euery thing according as he had prayed immediatly before. Such a providence was ſeene in the Midianites comming by, to goe into Egypt, while Ioseph lay in the pit that he might be ſold to them, that they might carry him into Egypt, as God had determined; the like providence in Moſes preſervation by Pharaohs daughter, is very apparent: for Gods providence is his guiding hand to effect what he hath decreed; hee willerh, and then his providence worketh the ſame. Which if wee will obſerue, we may eaſily ſee in our courſes, and ſay, Behold, the providence of God, and by wel marking the ſame, we would be moued greatly to praiſe God, wee would not murmure againſt croſſes, wee would commit our wayes vnto him, and waite on his good pleaſure with patience in all our affaires, knowing this certainly, that if hee hath determined a thing, it ſhall come to paſſe, though in mans reaſon moſt vnlikely.

Vnto whom he ſaid, Ho, ſuch a one, &c.] This kinsman was of worth, it appeareth by this, that hee ſate next Boaz, before the ten Elders; that he was able to redeeme land ſo ſoone after ten yeeres dearth; that hee regarded ſo much the marring of his owne inheritance; and laſtly, be-

Chap. 2.

Gen. 24.

Gen. 37.

Exod. 2.

Nehem. 5. 15.
Gen. 14. 22, 23.

PROV. 14. 2.

PROV. 21. 3.

1. King. 21. 7.

cause he was of the same family of *Elimelech*, and in birth before *Boaz*, yet by place it may seeme that *Boaz* was his better; though *Boaz* would not stand vpon his greatnesse and power with him, but he would proceed in this businesse according to equity and right, respecting so himselfe, as yet hee would not wrong another, but doe what was most meet to be done; teaching this, that *a godly man, a iust man, will not doe what hee may by his power, but what he ought by right*. Such a one was *Nehemiah* and *Abraham*: who would not doe according to that which was in their hand, but what was agreeable to iustice, and fit for them to doe: *Nehemiah* giueth the reason, because he feared God. This was it also that made *Ioseph* so to deale with his brethren, and not according to his power and their deserts. This is it which made *Iob* not to contemne his seruant; for he knew his seruant, as well as himselfe to be the Lords. Oh then let men of power imitate these men of might! it will argue that they also feare God: and vpriight and iust dealing is more acceptable to God, than sacrifices. Men must not be like *Nimrods* nor *Sauls*, to make their lusts a law, and their power the bounds of their practise. Remember *Iezabel*, who tooke by force and fraud *Naboths* Vineyard, but shee at length dearly paid for the same. Note hence againe, that *one not before another by birth, may bee his better by authority*, as *Boaz* was heere; so *Moses* before *Aaron*; *Ioseph* before his brethren, and *Dauid* before his: for God aduanceth not men as they be in birth,
but

but as his good pleasure is. And therefore let the Elder submit to the yonger, if God please to haue it so; and men descended of Nobles, submit to meane men aduanced by God, and that without enuie or disdayne: for God fetcheth beggers from the dung-hill, to set them among Princes: promotion is not from East or West, but from his hand: therefore must wee rest contented. Thirdly note, that *a man according to his authority, may speake to another wth authority, though in some respect the same be his better*, as the kinsman is here by birth, to whom Boaz yet thus speaketh. But why did hee not name him? Boaz did name, as these words (*Such a one*) doe shew: but the Penman of the Spirit passeth him by, either as not materiall, or rather for that hee was a worldling, louing land better than Gods Law; desiring the one, but not caring to obey the other. Hereby giuing vs to know, that *hee which loueth more the world, and his owne outward estate, than the Law and Word of God, is worthy to haue no name in Gods Booke, in the Booke of Life*. Therefore take heed and beware of couetousnesse; Old Father Lattimers Text.

Turne aside, sit downe here. Boaz willeth him to set aside his priuate busines for this publike work, and to sit downe to heare the matter: the matter concerned them both, & Boaz doth call him into the Court and place of iudgement about it. Whence note, that *it is lawfull vpon iust cause, for one man to call another into publicke places of iustice, to cleare mens rights*: for this cause God himselfe

1. Sam. 2.

Verse 4, 6.

Exod. 22. 8.

Exod. 18. 16.

1. Chro. 18. 14.

appointed amongst his people publicke Courts of iustice, gaue them Lawes to iudge by, and allowed men to take the benefit thereof: and godly men haue sate as Iudges, as *Moses*, *Dauid* and others for without this, some controuerfies cannot bee ended, so peruerse and partiall are many in their owne cause. Which confuteth the Anabaptists, who allow not of Magistrates, and this course of iustice in ending controuerfies: yet on the other side albeit men may iue one another, it must not be for euery trifle: it must not be in reuenge, malice, and with desire to hurt my neighbour: it must bee the last remedie: and when men goe to Law, they must doe it in loue, vse the Law as a Iudge and Moderator, and therefore must they chuse the most honest Lawyers, which will not sell their tongues, and abuse their wits for gaine: they are to beware of bribing any, they must not vse circumuentions, but bee content peaceably and louingly to let the equity of the Law decyde the matter, and therein quietly rest.

And he turned aside, and sate downe.] Though this man was one of some worth among them, and a worldly man too, yet hee for this publicke businesse, and for to shew his obedience to authority, turneth aside from his priuate affaires, and doth sit downe, as *Boaz* did will him. Whence note, First, that *when any are called to publicke businesse, priuate are to be laid aside for the time, to further the publicke*, as this man doth here, and as all good members of a Common-wealth should do,
for

for that publicke actions, and publicke causes should bee more neere and deare to vs than priuate: for in publicke things there is a respect vnto the priuate, which is more safe in the safety of that which is publicke. Therefore such as doe neglect wholly publicke wel-fare, and attend onely to the priuate good of their owne estate, they doe amisse, and euen so, as if a member of the body should see to it selfe, and neglect the body, which is the way at length to bring ruine vpon it selfe, which it seekes to preuent. This repro- ueth such as being able and fit men for publicke busineses, doe labour yet by all meanes to auoid them. As also much more such as being called to pnblicke authority, yea and bound by oath to the same, doe neuerthelesse liue as if no such duty were imposed vpon them, and are wholly taken vp with the thoughts of their owne priuate and houshold affaires. This so great neglect of that which is publicke, is no small detriment to the Common-weale; this great care of euery man for himselfe and for his owne priuate, and little or rather none for the publicke, is the cause of so great, and so many euils euery where among men. Secondly, that *men are so yeeld readily to lawfull authority commanding, whatsoeuer worth they be of, which are so commanded.* Men must bee like the Israelites, and do as they said they would doe to *Iosua*, euen to obey readily in all things, and so to vphold his authority, as also they would oppose theselues against such as would not obey. *Dauid* was very obedient vnto *Saul*, albeit hee was

Ios. 1. 16, 17, 18.

Rom. 13. 1, 4.
Tir. 3. 1.

1. Pet. 2. 13.

was anointed himselfe, hee stood not vpon his right, but waited the Lords time, and was willingly obedient. Thus should wee be to lawfull authority, as the Apostle exhorteth, and that by many reasons, in the Epistle to the Romanes, though in those times the Kings and Gouvernors were Heathen and bloudy persecutours. This condemneth those which are like *Corah* and his Companie; and like *Absalom* and his associats in conspiracie, which are so farre from obedience, as they rise vp in open Rebellion against lawfull authority. Such were the counterfeit Catholics; and such be they euer in heart, though not alway in action, in this our Soueraignes Dominions. This also checketh those, which, though they hate treason and rebellion, and will not disobey supreme authority, yet will despise inferior officers: but they are commanded the contrary, as the Apostle *Peter* teacheth: for not onely the King, as Supreme, but also such as be sent of him, are to bee obeyed of conscience for the Lords sake.

Verse 2. *And hee tooke ten men of the Elders of the Citie, and said, Sit yee downe heere. And they sate downe.*

HERE is set downe the Afsistants in this businesse: how many, what they were, whence taken, and their sitting downe in the place of Iudgement with *Boaz* and the Kinsman, after that *Boaz* had willed them so to doe.

And

And he tooke ten men.] The Elders and people were gathered together, it may seeme, before vnto the Gate: whether it was that they were especially sent for; or that they hearing that *Boaz* was gone vp to the Gate of the Citie, and so came voluntarily (as it was perhaps their manner so to doe, when they heard of any to goe vp to the place of Iudgement) it is not certaine; but the Elders were there, and the people also, verse the 11. and of the Elders hee chose onely ten, to sit in the place of Iudgement: why onely ten is no reason giuen; it may be, the number was chosen according to the ten yeeres of *Naomi* her absence in Moab, or according to the number of the ten Commandements, to put them in mind of their duety; or for what else, I will not further conjecture: it was a number thought fit in this case, for the hearing and determining of the matter. This wee note, in *Boaz* taking of these men, men of authority, that *publicke causes are to bee handled before publicke persons, and of them a competent number for the determining thereof*: for therefore are such appointed, publicke persons for publicke causes; and by such as haue authority to end matters, the thing in hand is more firmly established: and if there haue beene before, or might after contention arise, the same hereby is cut off and preuented. And therefore in such cases let such fit persons and so many bee Iudges, as may by their authority end businessses betweene one another.

Of the Elders.] Here I will note, First, what Elders

Chap. 1. 4.

Deut. 15. 7.
Ios. 20. 4.

1. King 20.7.8.

2. Chro. 5.2.

Esdra. 5.9.10.

1. Sam. 15.30.

2. Sam. 3.17. &

5.3. and 17.15.

Exod. 4.29 and

17.5. and 24.1.

Deut. 1.13.

Exod. 18.21.

See Zipper. de

Lege Mos.

li. 3. ca. 9.

Deut. 1.13.

Esa. 3.4.

2. Chro. 19.11.

2. Sam. 23.3.

2. Chro. 19.7.

Exod. 18.21.

Elders were. Secondly, of whom chosen. Thirdly, of what sort of persons. Fourthly, why set over the people. And lastly, why called Elders. For the first, Elders were men of authority, distinguished from the people, and ioyned with others, so as it is said, the *Princes and Elders*, Esdra. 10.8. Iudg. 8. 6, 14, 16. *Iudges and Elders*, Deut. 21.2. *Elders and Officers*, Num. 11.16. vnder this name were the chiefe in the Common-wealth comprehended, both out of Israel, Ios. 9.11. Num. 22.7. and in Israel, as in many places it fully appeareth: and therefore Princes are included in Elders, Iudg. 8. 6, 14, 16. and Rulers and Elders made one, Esdra. 5.9, 10. and 6.7, 8. The chiefe of the Kings house were called Elders, 2. Sam. 12.17. and such as in euery city bare rule, Deut. 21.3, 19, 20. for those which were appointed in euery city to be Iudges and Officers in Deut. 16. 18. are euery where after called by the name of the Elders of the city, Deut. 21.20. and 22.15, 18. Thus the Lord ordeined Gouverners to rule his people. For the second, they were chosen by the people, and admitted by *Moses*, as himselfe in a place witnesseth, which was to them a great libertie and freedome. For the third, they were of the best, able and fittest men, thus to be qualified, first, to bee men of wisdom and vnderstanding, and not childish and simple persons; for that is a punishment vpon the people, to haue such ouer them. Secondly, to be good men, religious, and fearing God: for such should rule ouer men, as haue conscience towards God, vnder whom, and for whose glory they

they are to rule, and with those the Lord will be, 2.Chron.19.11. Thirdly, to be men of truth, as *Iethro* aduifeth, that is, true men, as *Iosephs* brethren call themfelues; such as are that which they seeme to bee, not pretending one thing, and intending another, but in the course of iustice doe follow the truth of the cause, as the truth thereof shall appeare vnto them. Fourthly, to bee men hating couetousnesse; else will they take bribes, and loue dishonest gaine, and peruert iustice. Fifthly, to be knowne men in these things, Deut. 1.13. When such are set ouer a people, let vs praise God and reioyce: where such bee wanting, pray to God to send them: and where the contrary be, lament and bewaile the estate of such a people. Touching the fourth, why they bee set ouer a people? For the praise of the good, and the punishment of the bad, and to rule in iustice and in iudgement, and to gouerne the people: for that we bee all of a rebellious nature, since the fall of *Adam*. Now, to gouerne well, Magistrates and men in authority must doe two things: First, they must find out offences, they must enquire, and search out the same diligently: for one rebellious *Ionah* may hazard many mens liues, and the sinking of the ship; so one *Achan* may weaken a whole Armie: and therefore it is necessary to seeke them out, that sinne may be punished, and Gods wrath appeased. Secondly, they must iustly proceed against offences, and that thus: first, they must set Gods feare before them, as *Iehoshaphat* exhorts. Secondly, they must doe it in the spirit of

Exod. 18. 21.
Gen 42. 11.

Deut. 16. 19.
Prou. 1. 19.
Ezech 22. 27.
1. Sam. 8. 3.

1. Pet. 2. 13, 14.
2. Chron. 9. 8.

Deut. 13. 12.
Iob 29. 16.
Deut. 17. 4.

Ionah 1.
Ios. 7.

2. Chron. 19. 7.

Deut. 1. 17.
2. Chro. 19. 11.
Iob 29. 17. and
31. 34.
Deut. 1. 17. and
16. 18, 19.

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Iob 32. 9.

Leuit. 19. 32.
Prou. 16. 31.

Hist. lib. Antiqui-
sitat. gerenda Resp.
Lactant. Tit. de se-
nect. Val. Max.

of courage, not fearing the face of any, though many, though mightie. Thirdly, they must deale equally without respect of person, hearing the small, as well as the great, not wresting iudgement, but iudge the people with iust iudgement. For the last, why called Elders? It may be, they were chosen of the ancient of the people, or for the most part of such: for the Hebrew word here commeth of the Verbe which signifieth to bee waxen old: and the Assembly of the Elders is called the *Synedrion* of the old men, by the Grecians; and of these is it most meet that Iudges and Magistrates be chosen: first, for their wisdom and experience, though wisdom doth not alwaies abide with the aged. Secondly, for that such giue counsell with more mature deliberation, and haue not the force of affection to ouer-sway them as youth hath, which therefore is rash, and giueth often ill counsell; of which *Rehoboam* tasted and repented. Thirdly, for the grauitie of their countenance, which giueth grace and credit to their authority, and so are not so subiect to contempt, as the young in yeeres be: for the hoarie head is to bee honoured, and age is a Crowne of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. Fourthly, because they haue a strong motiue to perswade them to vpright dealing, euen their old age and the nighnesse of death. This made some Heathen to be vpright and stout against the mightie, as *Solon* against *Pisistratus*; and *Cecilius* against *Cesar*: the former said, his old age made him so to withstand the attempts of the Tyrant; & the latter told

told his friends, that his old age, and being also childlesse, made him dare to speake so roundly and freely against *Caesar*. We see then what reason there is, that the Gouvernours should bee ancient men, such as well might bee called Elders, not onely for authority, but for their yeeres and grauitie.

Of the Citie.] To wit, of Bethlehem: for in euery Citie by Gods appointmēt there were Officers and Iudges, the Elders of the people: how many were in euery citie is not certaine: in this, besides *Boaz* and the Kinsman, were ten. And it is said *tenne of them*, implying more. In Succoth were Princes and Elders threescore and seuen-teene. It may seeme, that the number of them was either greater or lesser, according to the populousnesse of the Inhabitants, and largenesse of the Cities: onely in Ierusalem was the great *Synedrion* consisting of the Seuentie two Elders constantly. In euery City were Courts of iustice, and euery matter came before those Elders; as matters concerning idolatrie, rebellion, and obstinacie of children giuen to ryotousnesse; also murder, adulterie, theft, and iniuries offered, and slander; so matters of marriage, and sale of land, as here in this place. The punishments which they inflicted, were pecuniarie sometime, sometime beating and whipping, and sometime death it selfe; likewise to this death were put inticers to idolatrie, and such as committed it; also a young woman that should play the whore in her fathers house; and those that committed adultery;

Deut. 16. 18.
Esdra. 10. 14.
2. Chron. 19. 5.

Iud. 8.

Deut. 17. 3, 5.
& 21. 18. & 19.
11. and 22.
21, 24.
Exo. 22.
Deut. 22. 14, 18

Deut. 21. 19.
and 25. 2.
Leuit. 19. 20.
Deut. 13. 10. &
17. 5. and 22.
21, 24. 106. 7.

Leuit. 24. 14. &
21. 9. & 20. 14.

Deut. 21. 22.

Deut. 17. 4. and
19. 15, 19.

Deut. 17. 19, 20.
1. Sa. 8. 11, 18.

Deut. 33. 5.

dultery; likewise the sacrilegious person, the blasphemmer, the wizzard, and the obstinate gluttonous and drunken sonne, all were stoned. Some were to bee burnt, as the Priests daughter playing the whore, and the incestuous person; and this death may seeme to bee before the Law for whoredome. Some were hanged for some offences: but before the punishment was inflicted, and before sentence was pronounced, there was diligent enquiry of the fact, and also competent witnesses to iustifie the same: for not one, but two or three witnesses were to establish a matter; and if any false witnesses were found, that was done to them, which they had thought to haue done to another. Thus we see, how these Elders proceeded in iustice, from whom there was no appeale in any matter, but in that which was too hard, and then were the parties to goe to Ierusalem vnto the Priests, the Leuites and Iudges there, and abide that Sentence without gaine-saying, and that vpon perill of their life. From the consideration of these things afore deliuered, touching superiority, and Courts of iustice every where, and such a Court from which could bee no appeale; wee may obserue; First, that *superi-aritie of some above the rest, is the ordinance of God, for the well gouerning of a Common-wealth*; the chiefe and best is that which is Monarchicall, when a King ruleth ouer the people, so he bee as *Moses* describeth, and not as *Samuel*: for God set first one, euen *King Moses*, as he is called ouer the people, and *Moses* prayeth that one might be set

set ouer the people, lest that the Israelites should bee as Sheep without a Shepherd, yea though then there were Captaines ouer thousands, hundreds, and tens, and the seuentie Elders vpon whom the Lord had put his Spirit. Againe, we reade that the Lord saued his people by Iudges or Princes, raised vp to lead them & to be Iudges ouer them. Futhermore, when the Israelites were seated in Canaan, & that there were the seuentie two Elders, also in euery citie Elders, yet is it said, That euery one did what seemed him good, because there was no King in Israel. Moreover, Israel neuer came to bee renowned, freeing themselves from all their Enemies, and subduing them which were round about them, till they had a King ouer them. Lastly, it is the wisdom of nations both ciuill and barbarous Heathen; besides the Church of God, to allow of this kind of gouernment, such as the Lord hath now placed ouer vs, that so euery man may not doe what he listeth, and therefore are wee to rest thankfull therewith, and praise the Name of our God. Secondly, that in well gouerned Common-wealths (like that of Israel, ordred by the wisdom of God himselfe) there should be many Courts of iustice, and so many, and so neere the townes and villages, that the people might haue speedy recourse whither to end any cause, which might fall out among them. In euery citie in Israel, in euery Tribe and city thereof, were Courts of iustice. In Iudah were an hundred and twelue Cities, which was but a little Circuit, euen so many Courts for iustice and

Iud. 3. & 4. and 6.

Iudg. 17 and 18. and 22.

1. Sam. 8. 5.

Deut. 16. 16.

iudgement, to which the townes and villages resorted which belonged to them, and in them, as is before noted, were all matters handled, without going any farther. This would prevent long journeyes, and so great expences of subiects; this would sooner bring causes to the hearing, and matters to an end: this were the way to haue sinne more easily and sooner punished. The Israelites did not stay till quarter Sessions, till Assises euery halfe yeere; till which time causes must rest, prisoners lye and dye in prison, or else learn such villanies there, as they will be euery the worse for, when they be deliuered. The Israelites were not constrained to take long journeyes euery Terme to the chiefe City of their Kingdome to try matters, as wee doe, and as wee were wont to doe, euen to go much farther, to Rome from England heretofore; but all had Courts for euery matter, for all offences, for controuersies of euery nature, hard at hand, and daily kept for any to haue access vnto. Which I thus speake of, onely not to condemne vtterly our courses, but to set out the politicall estate of the Iewes; a plat-forme of gouernment deuised by God himselfe, and therefore worthy imitation of all nations, and that before any other whatsoeuer: for the wisdome of no lawgiuer can be compared to the wisdome of this Heauenly Lawgiuer. Thirdly, that *it is meet, that such a Court of iustice bee in euery well ordered State; whose sentence should be definitiue, and with which men should rest.* So was it in Israel; from which none might decline vpon paine of death.

death. This would curbe contentions and vnquiet spirits, which be full of molestations, when by their purse they can maintaine their will, bringing causes from Court to Court, and about againe, onely to make the weaker partie wearie, and so to wring from him his right, or else to bee vtterly vndone in following the sute: a grievous sin, & that which cryeth aloud in the eares of the Lord, though Lawyers fill their purses by such deuilish deuices. Their money perish with them, which make themselues rich by such iniquities.

And hee said, Sit yee downe here.] Thus spake hee to the ten Elders, when the kinsman was set downe. Which sheweth, that as Boaz was a great man, so also the kinsman was of greater place than they, seeing he was placed before them: yet they did not of themselues doe any thing, neither did enter vpon the businesse, before these were set: so did hee esteeme of them and their authority. Whence may be noted, that wise men in government doe so behaue themselues, as they will take heed to do nothing that might weaken the authority of such as be fellowes in office, Iudges, Iustices, and Officers with them: for they know, that what they derogate from them, they take from themselues, as they be Magistrates. And therefore must Magistrates vphold such as be in authority with them; though some perhaps for their person bee vnworthy, yet must they bee regarded for the place they beare: and this shall they do, if, as Boaz heere, they giue them place with them, then not presume to handle matters apart without them,

equally belonging to all: and thirdly, to be content to haue their owne causes heard and iudged by them: the contrary hereto doth argue light esteeme of fellowes in cōmission, if not contempt.

And they sate downe.] Here was no exception taken against Boaz in any thing: he commanded in a fort, and they obeyed: for the spirit of enuie and pride were banished; else the matter had not thus been done in such peace and quietnesse: for *where one taketh no more vpon him than he may, and other yeeld what they ought, bring humble and not haughty, there euery thing is done peaceably,* as wee see here: but where a *Moses* meeteth with a rebellious-spirited proud *Corah* and his company, there all things fall out contrarily. The word *to sit*, is vsed sometime to consider of, to aduise, to take care of; and the gesture of sitting; which was the gesture of Kings and Iudges; is a gesture of rest, quietnesse and peace: to teach this, that *men in the seat of Iudgement should be aduised, considerate, carefull what they doe, and of a quiet spirit without perturbation.* Such a one was *Ioshua* in his proceeding against *Achan*, hee spake mildly, louingly, without passion, without words of bitterness, or contempt, yet did hee not neglect to execute iustice vpon him, as hee well deserved, and the cause required: he derided not the prisoner, hee railed nor vpon him; but with a fatherly grauitie and words of like authority he spake vnto him: his example is for imitation, and a checke to some deriding and scoffing spirits; sitting as Iudges vpon life and death.

1. King. 1. 46.
Prou. 20. 8.
Mat. 19. 28.
2. Sam. 7. 1.

Ios. 7. 19, 25.

Verse

Verse 3. *And hee said vnto the kinsman, Naomi that is come againe out of the countrey of Moab, selleth a parcell of land which was our brother Elimelechs.*

THUS Boaz beginneth his speech of the sale of land, who it was that would sell it, how much, a parcell, and to whom it did belong before, as thereby shewing her right vnto it, not as an Inheritrix, but as a dowrie to her, as his wife.

And hee said vnto the kinsman.] Before Boaz vttered the cause of his comming into that Session, hee saw all settled, and audience giuen: for though hee earnestly affected the businesse, as may appeare by that which hath beene deliuered of him in the former chapter, yet would he carry the matter wisely and discretely: hereby teaching this, *that the wisdom of a wise man keepeth him so, as he is not carried beyond discretion:* for wisdom maketh him to vnderstand his way, to bee also well aduised, to worke by vnderstanding, and to order his wayes with discretion. Such therefore as bee ouer-swayed with any passion either of loue, or anger, or what else exceeding discretion, want wisdom at that time to bridle their disordered affection, and vnruely passion, which is often brutish, without reason, without Religion, and therefore vnbesitting a godly man. Note farther, that Boaz hauing a cause, he in this great Session of ten Elders, besides the rest, declareth

Prou. 14. 8. and
13. 10. and 13.
16.

the matter himselfe, it beeing a happy libertie in that Common-wealth. It was not like those places, where men cannot bee allowed to speake in their owne cause, though they bee neuer so able, but they must hire others to speake for them: by which it commeth to passe, that causes are spunne out to an exceeding length, and not often faithfully handled: for men hired to set their wits and tongues on sale, what will they not doe? Doth not our age produce enow euill, lamentable and cursed fruits hereof? And haue we not cause to bewaile the manifold mischiefes and ensuing miseries, which this generation of euill men bringeth forth daily among vs.?

Naomi that is come againe out of the countrey of Moab.] Of her person, and returne from that place, see before, Chap. 1. 6. Here she is propounded as the sales-woman: the land she had by *Elimelech* her husband, as the last words of this verse shew, as her ioynture or dowrie: for wiues had land among the Iewes and Israelites: and good reason there is that wiues should be provided for by them, which haue lands to leaue them, because they are one with the husband, they haue laboured together, and loue binds the husband to haue care for her after death; for her comfort, her better esteeme even with her owne children: for if they haue any thing, then children will loue and honour them, and glad will they seeme to be which of them may haue her companie, and may please her best: but if she haue nothing, they will bee as glad, which may be rid of her. Therefore let husbands

2.King.3.6.

husbands haue a care to prouide for them, and not bee like some husbands, which giue all or most to children, and little or nothing to wiues, but what Law will giue them: and that he may so doe, let the wife labour to deserue well of the husband; and yet though thee deserue well, let him not giue all to her, and little to children, as some doe, and so vndoe both her selfe and children with an after-choise of a bad husband.

Selleth a parcell of land.] That is, determineth to sell a portion or piece of land left her by *Eli-melech*. Shee was growne poore, and therefore might sell her land: for so we doe reade, that *the poore might sell land or houses: and this selling and buying is lawfull*, as wee may see by Gods approbation, and the practice of the godly in buying and selling. The manner of purchase, and sale, and conueyance is shewed in the Prophecie of *Jeremie*: it must be without oppression: and this will bee auoided, if men feare God. But the Lord allowed not the sale but vpon necessity; hee must become poore first. The Iewish Interpreters vpon that place of *Leuiticus* say, that no man but the poore might sell his inheritance; other might not sell to put money in their purses, to make marchandize, or other things, saue onely for food and necessary liuelihood. How iustly then are here condemned among vs, such as sell their lands for to spend at play, to runne a whoring, to goe gayly, and in costly rayment, to keepe Hawkes and Hounds, to trauell into Idolatrous countreys to see fashions, and to learne, not good

Leuit. 25. 25,
29.

Gen. 23.

Ier. 32. 6, 44.

Leuit. 25. 14.

Leuit. 25. 25.

manners, but bad conditions with Apish cōplements? Others also which sell their possessions, because they would liue idly, to put the money out to vsurie, and so liue lazily, but yet cursedly, vpon the sweate of other mens browes. These and the other should say with *Nbath*, God forbid that I should sell my fathers inheritance, especially selling as these doe, to bestow and lay out the mony so accursedly. But let such Vnthrifts know, which sell their land to waste vpon their lust, that they doe wickedly rob their posterity, they weaken their present estate, they bring vpon themselves beggery, and so contempt and misery, and that very iustly, and do (as much as lieth in them) roote out their names from the places, where their Ancestours, by Gods blessing, had planted them; and when all is spent, they expose themselves to many temptations, to take lewd courses to helpe themselves, which bring many to a shamefull end. Let them remember, that if they cannot liue with their estates, how can they liue without them? Paines they cannot take, they haue idly beene brought vp; which often is the cause of this prodigality: to beg they bee ashamed, because of reproach iustly to light vpon them; therefore must they fall to stealing, and so come that way into the Magistrates hands, that they may be punished for their former villanies, which the Magistrate took no notice of, or made no conscience to punish.

Which was our brother Elimelechs.] Thus Boaz calleth him, who was but his kinsman, though neere.

neere. This was vsuall among the Iewes and Israelites so to call one another; yea, it is obseruable, that *Gods people in all ages haue called one another brethren*; before the Law, vnder the Law, and in the time of the Gospell; and good reason so to do: for they haue all one Father, and all one Mother: Which should teach vs brotherly loue one towards another; to loue as brethren, that is, with respect to our Father, and wee his adopted Children: for who so after this manner loueth, is translated from death to life. Also such as loue like brethren, are familiar, they haue a feeling of each others estate both in prosperity and aduersity, reioycing or sorrowing, as it falleth out, and that because they be brethren; they doe also shew readinesse to helpe one another, as brethren should doe, and they hold it a shame to do them wrong. Therefore let vs loue, and loue as brethren, and try it by these true brother-like marks of loue: which if a man doe, hee shall find little brotherly loue among men: for few loue a man in this respect, as he is the Child of God: few are familiar with the vertuous for their vertues sake: And who mourneth with them in the true cause of their mourning, or reioyceth with them in their ioy? If men so doe, where is their helping hand to further their ioy, or to helpe them when they be troubled for righteousness sake?

Gen. 14. 14.
Exod. 2. 11.
Leuit. 19. 17.
Deut. 13. 19.
Rom. 1. 13.
Mat. 6.
Gal. 4. 36.
1. Pet. 2. 17.
Rom. 12. 10.
Heb. 13. 1.
1. Thes. 4. 9.
1. Ioh. 3. 14.

Verse 4. *And I thought to aduertise thee, saying, Buy it before the Inhabitants, and before the Elders of my people. If thou wilt redeeme it, redeeme it; but if thou wilt not redeeme it, then tell me that I may know: for there is none to redeeme it, besides thee, and I am after thee. And hee said, I will redeeme it.*

Boaz here sheweth why he telleth the kinsman of Naomi her selling of land, to offer him the sale first. In which offer note, First, what the offer is, to buy it; then, before whom. Thirdly, the manner of propounding it, as left free to his choise, to redeeme or not to redeeme. Fourthly, the reason why offered to him in the first place, and that by Boaz. Lastly, the kinsmans answer, taking the offer.

And I thought to aduertise thee.] To wit, of the sale of the land: and this Boaz doth, for that hee had to deale with a worldling, with whom hee would deale plainely, in telling him first of that which most affected him, and of the earthly commodity, before hee spake of marrying Ruth. Whence we may learne, First, that *worldlings are carried away most with worldly respects*: therefore Boaz doth thus begin with the kinsman: for worldlings fauour onely of the Earth, like Moales which liue in it; and though they now and then come vp out of the Earth, they by and by runne againe into it; they are like the Serpent, whose seed they bee, liuing vpon the dust of the Earth,

Earth, gold, siluer, and transitorie goods, the sight & enjoying whereof is to them as food and life; their wisdome also is from below, which is *Earthly*, making men couetous; and *Sensuall*, making men delight in beastly pleasures; and *Deuillish*, full of craft, fraud, wicked policie, and subtrill deuices. This wisdome below followeth the things of this world, euen the lusts of the eies, which are earthly; the lusts of the flesh, which are sensuall; and pride of life, which is deuillish. Therefore let vs hereby try our worldinesse, and whether wee be such as worldlings be, the signes whereof bee these: First, when we are more moued to doe any thing for profit and gaine, then for the Commandement of God, or charitie, or any other motiue by which the godly are drawne on to doe that which they should doe. Secondly, when our hearts are wholly set vpon the world, minding altogether earthly things, which sheweth that there is our treasure, because our hearts be there. Thirdly, when we grow more couetous, as riches encrease, setting our hearts vpon them. Fourthly, when wee speake like worldlings, who can vtter their thoughts freely in these earthly matters; but are in spirituall matters very blockish, if not senselesse. Fifthly, when wee be not liberall-minded; for a liberall person is set against the niggard and churle, who is called in Hebrew, *Nabal*, a foole: for so is the couetous worldling: also *Kelai*, of a word which signifieth to consume, for that hee wasteth himselfe in the world, and for the world: by circumlocution he

is

James 3.15.

Esaï 32.6.

Esaï 32.

נבל

PROV. 1. 19.
Ecclef. 5. 10.

φιδρυμ
Luke 16. 14.
ἡλίου κτθ.

Heb. 13.

1. Theſ. 4.

is ſaid to be one *greedie of gaine*, one that loveth ſilver, and abundance, and is not ſatisfied. The Grecians calleth him *Philarguros*, one that loveth money; and *Pleoneſtes*, one that would haue more, neuer contented: and therefore to be covetous and contented, are put as contraries, the one being forbidden, and the other commanded: this is the worldling. Secondly, note, that an *honest man* dealeth plainly, and not covertly with others in theſe worldly buſineſſes. Boaz concealeth not the commoditie, which the kinsman might reape in marrying of *Ruth*; he propoundeth not her, & concealeth this: for an honest man hateth fraud and deceit; he doth to others, as hee would that they ſhould doe to him. If therefore we would bee held honest, let vs deale vprightly and plainly with others, with whom we haue to doe: for it is ſincerity, it maketh a mans word of credit, and bringeth him into the reputation of an honest man: and let this be remembered, that fraud and deceit God will certainly auenge. Thirdly, note, that *albeit man may not deceiue his brother*, yet is he to proceed wiſely, to uſe prudence and diſcretion in his affaires: as knowing what to ſpeake firſt, what next: for there is time for all things, as *Salomon* ſaith, ſo in this alſo. And it is no fraud to utter one thing before another, and ſo to ſpeake truly to further the matter in hand; to conceale alſo a thing for a time, ſo it be with no ill intent, not to deceiue, or hurt my brother any way, it is not to bee condemned, but rather to bee allowed, as a point of wiſedome and prudence in a man: and there-

therefore may it be obserued honestly and iustly,
 without staine or cracke of credit. *Saying, Buy it before the Inhabitants, and before
 the Elders of my people.*] Both the Elders and
 people were gathered together, as we may heere
 see, and in verses 9. 11. Here the Inhabitants are
 named before the Elders; in the 9. verse the El-
 ders before them; and in verse 11. these before
 the Elders againe, as shewing how one dependeth
 upon the other, the Elders upon the people, and the
 people on them by mutual relation, one assisting ano-
 ther; the Officers, the people, by their power and
 authority; and the people these by aid and helpe,
 as they should be commanded: which is peacea-
 ble happinesse in a Common-wealth. In that
 they beecalled Boaz his people, it sheweth the
 greatnesse of this mans power in Bethlehem, as
 Lord and chiefe Gouvernor there; of whose great-
 nesse I haue spoken before. He doth heere bring
 this matter thus into the publicke Assembly; for
 that it was publicke; for more peaceable proce-
 ding; for better assurance, ratification, and con-
 firmation of the businesse, when it should be con-
 cluded there before such Elders, and so great As-
 sembly of people. Lastly, because it was to be fi-
 nished in the gate of the Ciry, by the Law of Mo-
 ses; so it was not done in vaine glory, or from an
 high spirit, but for that reason and necessity so
 required. *Matters of importance are so to bee handled
 for place and person, as may best serue to end the same
 peaceably without farther adoe, if it may be.*
If thou wilt rederne it, rederne it. Boaz doth not
 vrge

Deut. 15. 7, 8.

Esaï. 59. 20.

Tit. 2. 14.

1. Pet. 1. 18.

Luk. 1. 74, 75.

Gal. 4. 5.

Gal. 3. 13, 14.

1. Thef. 1. 10.

vrge him, but leaueth him to his choise; he tel-
leth him of the land, but vrgeth him not with the
Law; because he did not much care, whether the
kinsman would redeeme it or no, hauing a desire
to match with *Ruth* himselfe. Whence we may
obserue, that *there a thing is rather propounded,*
then heartily vrged, where the mind is not bent to
haue it effected: that wee vsually leaue to mens
choise, which we are very indifferent in, not much
caring whether it be, or bee not. So doe many
preach, propounding the Doctrine of godlinesse,
rather than earnestly vrging the same; because
they bee indifferent towards their hearers, not
much caring whether they serue God or no. By
this may the heartie affection or coldnesse in a
cause be iudged of. Here note by the way, how
the Kinsman the Redeemer was a type of Christ, who
became, by taking our nature vpon him, our Bro-
ther and Redeemer, who redeemeth vs, First,
from sinne, from a vaine conuersation, that wee
might bee a peculiar people to God, zealous of
good workes. Secondly, from our Enemies, that
we might serue him in holinesse and righteous-
nesse all the dayes of our life. Thirdly, from vn-
der the Law, that we might receiue the adoption
of sonnes. Fourthly, from the curse of the Law,
that the blessing of *Abraham* might come vpon
vs, and that wee might receiue the promise of
the Spirit. Fifthly, from the wrath to come, and
so to giue vs the Inheritance of Life and Glory.

*But if thou wilt not redeeme it, then tell me, that I
may know.* Note, First, that a man is either to per-
forme

forme his dutie, or to render vp his right to another that will: for else he is as the tree, which keepeth the ground barren, and good for nothing, but to bee cut downe, and cast into the fire. A good lesson to idle and negligent Ministers, who should either take paines to teach, or yeeld vp their places to such as would; else let them looke for the end of the vnfruitfull tree, and the reward of the vnprofitable, wicked and slothfull seruant, which was cast into vtter darkenesse, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Secondly, that one man knoweth not the mind of another, till it be reuealed and made knowne vnto him, as Boaz acknowledged here, and as the Apostle teacheth, and Salomon also: and therefore are we to bee charitable in censuring mens hearts, when wee know not the intent thereof, till it be reuealed, as by words: for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; or by workes; for, as our Saviour saith, *By their workes you shall know them*; or by signes and tokens; by lookes and gesture: for where the eyes bee lostie, the heart is hautie; and the gesture stately, the minde is great. Thus may wee iudge of the mind and heart: for by words, workes, and gesture may they be knowne, and their countenance, saith Esay, *doth witnesse against them*. And therefore should we looke to these, and strue to haue an outward carriage comely and decent as befitte Christians, if we would not haue the inward man censured and thought euill of:

For there is none to redeeme it besides thee.] The reason

Luke 13.

Mat. 25. 30.

1. Cor. 2. 11.
Prou. 20. 17.

Psal. 131. 1. &
101. 5.

Esai. 3. 9, 16.

reason why he aduertiseth the kinsman: for that he was the next, if the other refused, and the other had the right before him. *An honest and iust dealing man will not enter vpon another mans right without his leaue, and first acquainting him therewith: for otherwise wrong should bee offered to him, which an honest man is loth to doe, loue binding him to doe better vnto his neighbour, as we see by Boaz here; whose example let vs bee willing to follow, as we would be accounted iust and honest. Againe note, that in the sale of land, he is to haue the first offer, who hath a right thereto after the present possessor; before another: if such a one be able and willing to buy the same, if either the Law would make him heire, or the bond of naturall loue should perswade thereto. In so doing, an euen course is kept, loue is obserued, houses and families are vpheld, when that which belonged to a familie or kindred, is kept among themselves, and not alienated vnto another house or stocke: which therefore for mens outward name and better strengthening of their familie, is fit to be obserued.*

And I am after thee. As if he had said, I rather than any other propound this vnto thee, because if thou wilt not doe thy duty, I will; being the next kinsman. They are most fit to put others in mind of their duty, which haue a more speciall reason and calling thereto than others, and a mind and ability to performe what others doe neglect. for where these concurre, as they did in Boaz, the partie admonishing cannot iustly bee excepted against. And there-

therefore let vs looke whether we, in going to vrge others to their dueties, haue a calling by speciall reason so to doe, else may we be condemned for too busy-bodies; likewise whether wee haue a conscience in our selues, that we bee not guiltie of vnwillingnesse to do our duety in that which we presse others vnto, lest it bee said to vs, *Physician, heale thy selfe.*

And hee said, I will redeeme it.] This sheweth that hee was a worldling: for this kinsman, after so long a famine, had ready money to purchase, but not a penny to giue to poore *Naomi* and *Ruth*, as *Boaz* did. *Boaz* was rich, and had wherewith to redeeme the inheritance, but he was mercifull; so he was a rich man in the world, but not of it, as a worldling is: for *a worldling is one of the world, louing it, seeking it with greedinesse, hoarding up, and ready euer to be buying, but without mercy to the poore,* as this Kinsman seemed to be. By this, learne to behold a worldling, and a godly rich man; both getters, both full of coyne, both ready to purchase, herein they differ not: but the one hath regard to the Law of God, so not the other; one hath a mercifull heart to be liberall to the poore, and so hath not the other; the one in his purchase hath respect to the good of his brother, the other regards wholly and onely his owne commodity; for hee is vn-satiable, being like the dry sandy ground, which drinks vp raine; like the Dropsie, the Horse-leech, the Graue, and barraine Wombe, which be neuer satisfied; no more is the couetous worldling, his encreasing

Heb. 13. 5.

and getting satisfieth him not; but rather maketh him the more greedy of gaine. Which miserable corruption is much to be bewailed, and happy contentment is to bee sought after, as the Apostle exhorteth.

Verse 5. *Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.*

BOAZ propoundeth now the thing principally intended. In which may be noted, when it was spoken of, what, and the end why.

Then said Boaz. When hee saw him forward to buy the land, and as one prepared thereby, in his vnderstanding, to haue the offer of Ruth made to him, then he propounded her, teaching this, that then a matter is fit to be spoken of, when the party may seeme to bee prepared thereunto: and this is wisdom both concerning spirituall and corporall things. Thus may we see how Boaz did here; so the wise woman of Tekoa did to David; and in like sort Nathan to David; the Prophet to Ahab; and thus did Ioseph prepare his brethren, before hee discovered himselfe to them. And in this manner doth God in shewing his will to vs, he prepared his people in giuing the Law: and Iohn Baptist must prepare the way before Christ come with the Gospell: and so must Paul be prepared with humiliation, before the Lord tell him his good pleasure, and put him into his function

to

2. Sam. 14.

1. King. 10. 39.

40, 42.

Exod. 19.

to carry his Name vnto the Gentiles: And thus did *Peter*, before he propounded the chusing of *Matthias*, and the Word of glad tidings to the Iewes: for in doing this, we may greatly further what we doe intend. And therefore let vs learne this wisedome to put it also into practice.

What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabiteſſe.

The reason of this speech of buying first of *Naomi*, then of *Ruth*, is this: *Naomi* was *Elimelechs* widdow, to whom the land did belong, and whom the kinsman should haue married; but seeing shee was too old to marry, and to beare children; and now *Ruth* yong, and the widdow of one of *Naomi* her sonnes, shee was to supply *Naomi* her defect; and shee, when the land was to bee redeemed, must also be married to the Kinsman, albeit shee was a Moabiteſſe: for Gods Law was not partiall, but extended in Israel, in that case, for which the Law was given to the woman, whether shee were an Israeliteſſe, or of another nation, and married to an Israelite. Note here, that *Boaz* at the first propounded not so much as he intended: yea, what is principally intended, is often last propounded; as here, or wholely concealed; vsuall with Statists: as we may see in *Saul*, who propounded the marriage of his daughter to *Dauid*, as if hee honoured and loued him, when the end of his policie was to destroy him. *Seroboam* propoundeth tranquillitie and rest to *Israel*, and that he had care to saue them from so great cost & trouble, as to go vp to *Ierusalem*,

Act. 9.
Acts 1. and 2.

1. Sam. 18. 9,
17, 21, 25.

1.King.12.
26,27.

1.Sam.16.2.

2.Sam.17.

there to worship; hee would for their ease, haue them worship at *Dan* and *Bethel* the golden Calues: but this their fleshly ease, effected by this deuillish policie, was not intended, but the safety of himselfe, and the confirming of the Kingdome to himselfe, of which yet in the end he was deceived. Seeing that lesse is at first propounded sometime then intended, and the maine thing now and then concealed, as these examples shew, and as wee may see it in the Serpent that Grand Politician vnto *Eue*; let men learne to be wise to sift the drift, if they haue to do with men of wisdom, and of a deepe reach; else auoid them, if their owne apprehension bee too shallow to conceiue them, lest by credulity they bee overthrowne. But it may here be asked, seeing Boaz did propound not that which at the first he chiefly aimed at, whether it be lawfull so to doe? I answer, Yes: for to propound one thing before another, is not euill, neither to conceale sometime part of our mind, as wee may see in *Samuel*; so aduised by God himselfe to speake: yea that may bee sometime spoken, and in some case, which may seeme to further a thing in hand, and yet bee the way to preuent, and tend to the well-fare of another, as the counsell of *Hushai* to *Absalom*, which counsell was not to overthrow *Absalom*, though by Gods hand it fell out so, but to prouide for the safety of *Dauid*, and to crosse the counsell of *Achitophel*, which tended to the vtter destruction of *Dauid*, the Lords Anoynted; which was honest and godly policie, in which no euill, but good was intended

intended of *Hushai* his part, which differs much from the damnable policie of *Saul* and *Ieroboam*: which subtil men most commonly follow and put in practice. We may also obserue here maintenance for *Naomi*, and marriage for *Ruth*, so as both the widdowes were cared for: for *of widdowes God hath euer had an especiall care*. To a widdow must *Eliab* goe to preserue both his owne and her life: for a widdow must *Elisha* worke a miracle to discharge her debts, that shee and her children also may liue: for widdowes left childlesse, a Law was made for their marriage, and maintenance allowed for such, if shee were a Priests daughter, when she returned to her fathers house. And therefore let men haue respect to the widdowes, as *James* exhorteth, who maketh it a chiefe signe, or character of our Religion before God.

The wife of the dead.] This sheweth how *Ruth* came to haue a right in an Israelite to marry with him, because her husband was an Israelite, and the Law was, that the widdow of such a one, the next kinsman should marry, if hee died without issue. But yet this is not all: for *Orpha* was the wife of the dead too; shee was married to *Chilion* brother to *Mablon*: but *Ruths* Religion and comming with *Naomi* to dwell among Gods people, giue her this benefit of Gods Law. By which wee may learne, that *Religion*, and not any earthly priuiledge, doth interest vs into the Law of God and the benefit thereof: for otherwise *Orpha* had as much right by the Law to the Kinsman

Exo. 22. 22, 23.

1. King. 17.

2. King. 4. 1.

Deut. 25.

Leuit. 22. 13.

James 1. 27.

and to Boaz as Ruth had. If therefore we claime a benefit by the Word, let vs bee religious: for godlinesse hath the promise of this life, and the life to come: but vnto the wicked no hope, so long as they so remaine, but to them the threatenings and curses be due.

Deut. 25. 5.

To raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

Deut. 25. 6.

This was Moses Law, and ordained for diuers causes: first, to shew that by death, the right of inheritance was not lost: for it is called *his* inheritance, which figured out this, that by death we lose not our right of Heauen, which is called our inheritance. Secondly, to provide that the widow should not be without children; thereby typing, or figuring vnto vs, that the Church should not be left barren. Thirdly, to make the dead to liue againe, and his name to remaine among such as were in the land of the liuing: so teaching, that the dead should rise, and enioy Life euerlasting. Fourthly, to preserve the name of the dead, that it should not bee put out: so giuing vs to know, that God keepeth our names in remembrance, and we shall not perish. Fifthly and lastly, to preserve the honour of the first borne; when hee that was begotten by the kinsman, was to beare the name of the dead, and not his name which begot him: so God would teach vs, that Christ, the first begotten, should be honoured; and such as were begotten by spiritual Fathers, the Ministers of the Word, should carry Christs Name, and from him bee called Christians, & not by the name of their Teachers,

as if they begot people to themselves, but onely to Christ, to keepe vp his Name amongst his Saints for euer. Besides these ends, and this typicall and figuratiue meaning, wee may obserue, that by *Moses Law*, kindred were to vphold the name of their house, that it perished not: for it was a great curse to haue a mans name rooted out. And though that Law doe not bind vs, yet the Law of naturall loue, and louing respect to our owne kindred, the name and credit of those which we come of, yea, and the honour which our family may come vnto by obtaining antiquitie, should make vs vphold it: for ancient families haue a certaine honour vpon them for antiquitie sake, though otherwise but poore and meane. Now, to keepe vp a name, and that in good credit, we must obserue and fulfill these things: first, plant Religion, and keep that among vs: for so God will vphold and strengthen vs, and blesse vs and ours: the godly shall be had in an euermore remembrance, but the name of the wicked shall rot. Secondly, bring vp our children, and so teach them to bring vp theirs, in honest courses and callings, and not to let them liue idly and vainely: for nothing preuenteth euill more, nor vpholds a mans estate better, than to liue with industry and diligence in a calling: and what ouerthroweth houses, and bringeth men to ruine, making Gallants to sell away their inheritances, but that they haue beene idly brought vp, without callings, without honest employments? Thirdly, keepe our Genealogies, from

Psal. 109. 13.
Ier. 22. 30.

See Verse 12.

our Ancestours, and the increase of our posterities, to behold therein the Lords blessing; and to reioyce in our encreasing the Lords Church. Fourthly, we must helpe them vp againe, which by Gods hand fall into decay: common charity, and naturall loue doe perswade hereunto, and our owne credit also, in keeping our name from contempt, if that respect may moue vs: for the more poore, the lesse esteeme, and the greater contempt. Fifthly; we must labour to preferre our kindred to good marriages, to good places, as they shall be fit, and occasions offered, as farre forth as we shall be able to the vtmost. Sixtly, we must loue one another entirely. Which shall appeare: first, by our enquiring after one another, when we be separated. Secondly, by visiting one another neere, and sending one to another farther off. Thirdly, by being glad to see any of them, though descended many degrees from vs: for the further off, the better appeareth the antiquity of our kindred, and the greater encrease of our house. Fourthly, by being desirous that one should make vse of another, before any other whatsoeuer: for this combineth them very neerely in affection. Fifthly and lastly, to defend them in their iust causes, and to be as one man to preserue them from wrongs and iniuries offered them vniustly: this doe, but yet onely as farre as may stand with publike peace; for that must bee preferred before kindred, yea and our owne estate and liues, lest we runne into factions and partakings, and so cause ciuill dissention, which must be

be most carefully auoided: but otherwise, being no breach of publicke peace, no wrecke of conscience, nothing against iustice and legall proceedings, we must defend them, and in their good courses vphold them in loue and charity. If euery house and familie would doe thus, should not men be happy? should not euery one rest in peace vnder his owne vine? The rich friends would supply the want of their poore kindred, and the poore would honour them, and lay downe their liues for them. Charity would rule as Queene, and iustice would sit in peace; Religion would flourish, and the Land would bee blessed, and people made renowned, admired and feared. Before I end this verse, here it may be asked, *Whether the Law of Moses, mentioning a brother, be to be vnderstood of naturall breshren, or onely, as the Hebrewes vse to vnderstand brother, a neere kinsman, and not a naturall brother?*

Answer. It is to bee vnderstood of a naturall brother: for the Law was in vse before it was written, and so then vnderstood by *Iudah* and *Thamar*, God dispensing therewith: and *Naomi* thus vnderstood it also: though, if there bee no brother, the nighest kinsman then must marry the widdow; therefore *Ruth* claimed it of *Boaz*, and *Boaz* did propound it to the neerer kinsman: besides these, Learned men doe take the Law to be so meant.



Deut. 25. f.

Gen. 38. 17, 18.

Chap. 1. 13.

Verse

Verse 6. *And the Kinsman said, I cannot redeeme it for my selfe; lest I marre mine owne inheritance: redeeme thou my right to thy selfe: for I cannot redeeme it.*

THe Kinsmans answer to *Boaz* concerning his propounding of *Ruth* to him. He refuseth her, and giueth his reason: then, he resigneth his right to *Boaz*, and repeareth againe the words of refusall, as a reason of his resignation.

And the Kinsman said, I cannot redeeme it for my selfe.] He could before redeeme it, but now, he saith he cannot, he loued the land, and in that respect hee was ready to fulfill the Law, but hee cared not for the woman, the poore widdow; and in this regard the Law was not respected of him. So we see, how that *Worldlings* are partiall obseruers of Gods Law: some part they take, and some part they leaue, euen as it liketh them; they looke to the bare Letter, but not the spirituall meaning; they shunne the act, but for words and thoughts they doe take no care; the sinnes in the grossest kind they auoid, but the lesser, as they account them, they make little or no conscience of; that which concerneth their pleasure, and their profit according to the Law, they are ready to doe, but on the contrary, where the Law crosseth them, that they cast behind them, as this Kinsman here; they hate popish fasts, but loue drunken feasts; they abhorre superstitious worship and cost about it, but they can bee content

tent to liue of sacriledge, and the maintenance due to Ministers, though giuen by Ancestours to the Church with an execration or curse vpon such as shall change them to any other vse; other mens dueties they can heare of, and vrge the Law to them: but to be told of their owne, and pressed to the performance thereof, they cannot endure. The reasons of this partiality are these: First, the want of the true loue of God, and reuerent feare of the power and authority of the Lawgiuer: for where this loue and feare is, there will be respect had to all the Commandements, without partiality, as we may see in *Dauid*, and in other holy men of God. Secondly, the vnbridled lust of man vnsubdued, & not brought into the obedience of Christ by the power of the Word, as Saint *Paul* speaketh: for if the Word ruled in their hearts, they would not be thus partiall in obeying Gods will, but bee like *Zacharie* and *Elizabeth*, walking in all the Commandements of God vnblameable. Thirdly, their loue of pleasure and worldly profit more than God himselfe, which appeareth by this, that they will lose neither of these for Religion sake. *Herod* will doe many things, but his pleasure with *Herodias* he will not forgoe. *Ananias* and *Saphira* will giue much, sell all to giue to the Church, but not giue all, they will thinke more of the matter, than giue away all at once, though still they will pretend it: such *Herod*-like, and such *Ananias*es there bee, which haue not denied their pleasures, nor their profits for Religion sake: which therefore maketh them

Psal. 119. 6.

2. Cor. 10. 5.

Luk. 1. 6.

Ioh. 12. 43, 43.

them partiall in their obedience to God. Fourthly, the loue of praises of men, and feare of them, make them to make balkes in their seruice to God, now omitting this, then that, and heere trespassing, and there offending against the Law, to get this mans praise, and not to displease that, being bound onely to man, but loose in their hearts to follow their owne wils, in respect of any conscience towards God. Fifthly, the deadnesse and benumbednes of their consciences (for want of looking into Gods Law, and the searching out of their wayes by the same) which neuer troubles them for neglect of their dueties, nor for the breach of any part of the Law. Sixthly, a carnall perswasion of their good estate, and that in thus doing, they be not so much to blame, because they thrue in the world, they get many friends, and they see others also to be their companions with them herein of the best ranke in the world, and such as profess to be better, yet are taken tardie in foule faults, and therefore are they hartened hereby in this their halting seruice and partiall obediēce to God. Let vs take knowledge of this to bewaile it, then to remoue these causes, and to labour for the contrary graces, that wee may serue God with all our hearts. Note againe, how he saith, *I cannot*, when hee might haue said, *I will not*: but hence we see, that *what man will not doe, that hee excuseth with, I cannot doe*. So did the high Priests and Elders answer our Sauour, saying, they could not tell, when indeed they would not tel him what they thought of *Iohns Baptisme*:

Mat. 27. 27.

for

for *I cannot* is a more modest speech than *I will not*, and it carrieth a reasonable excuse with it for in reason we thinke, that what a man cannot doe, he should not be vrged to doe; and therefore doe men vse to say they cannot doe that, which they haue no will to doe; either of a froward spirit, which is to be condemned; or vpon respect of some inconueniences, which may in some sort be excused with *I cannot doe*, to wit, with conueniencie: but this must not excuse or hinder our duety of charitie, to neglect the helping of our brother in this his necessity, or to omit to doe what we ought, or may well doe: for so to say, *I cannot*, is vntruth, and an euill excuse.

[*Leſt I marre mine owne inheritance.*] Thus this Kinsman excuseth his refusall of *Ruth*. He might thinke, perhaps, being a worldling, that he might marre it, if he married a young woman, and so bee overcharged with children, or that in marrying *Ruth*, hee should bee burthened with poore *Naomi*: or he hauing children by another, should by this bring a new charge vpon him, and occasion discord by children of diuers women, which seldome agree, as may be seene in *Ismael* & *Isaac*, and *Iacob*s sonnes: or he might haue another wife (as vpon this place some doe note) and so by taking this, the house might be filled with contention, as wee may see when *Abraham* tooke *Hagar* to *Sarah*, also in the wiues of *Iacob*, *Elkanah* his two wiues, and as is very like betweene the wiues of *Lamech*, the first Bigamist. Or lastly, he might thinke, hauing a good inheritance of his

his owne, by taking *Ruth*, and begetting a sonne to the dead, and so perhaps hauing no more, should thereby raise vp the name of the dead vp on his inheritance, and want one for his owne, which he would not so marre, as he saith, whatsoeuer his thought was, thus to moue him to speake. We may learne, that a *Worldling* is carefull to preserve his outward estate, that it be not marred, as he here speaketh: for such a one is wise in his generation: hee loueth his riches and wealth, and he feareth want: and it is not amisse to care to get honestly, and to preserve our lands and goods, when wee haue them: for they are Gods gift, and wee are made his Stewards ouer them, to keepe them carefully, and to imploy them according to his will, and not after our lusts: yea, this wee are commanded to doe, and vrged by *Salomon* thereto by many reasons: this care had *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, & *Naboth*; and the Apostle telleth vs, that euery one is to provide for his familie, as the good Huswife doth; and parents are to lay vp for their children, which they cannot doe, except they be painefull, frugall, and do care to vphold their estates: and therefore thus farre a worldling is not to bee reprov'd; but as farre forth as he careth for the world with neglect of Religion in himselfe, and in his family, (when as first we must seeke Gods Kingdome, as Christ commandeth, and that in the first, and not in the last place) and as farre as he keepeth it with ship wracke of conscience, vpholding it by ill meanes, and hauing no care to doe good works: which

Pro. 27. 23, 24,
25, 26, 27.
Gen. 33. 13, 14.
1. King. 21.
1. Tim. 5. 8.
Prou. 31.
1. Cor. 13.

Mat. 6. 33.

which two; that is, the neglect of Gods service, and of keeping of a good conscience, if they bee auoided, men may in the care of their outward estate, bee well warranted to keepe and preferue Gods blessings bestowed vpon them, euer in faith to God; and loue to our breithren: for, with all care wee ought most of all to vphold our spirituall estate, that we marre not that, and lose our hope of Heauen; but let the care of the one put vs in mind of the care of the other, as euery way more excellent. Note farther from this man, that *Worldlings thinke by obeying Gods Law, they shall marre their earthly estate;* that Religion will ouerthrow them: and thus they imagine, first, because they see Gods Word to crosse their worldly courses, whereby they doe vse to get and vphold their estate, which indeed, cannot stand with Religion, pure, & vndefiled before God. Secondly, because they are perswaded that they must doe, as men of the world doe, else they shall not thriue, howsoeuer Religion it selfe binds them to the contrary. Thirdly, because they trust not God, nor rely vpon his Word. Fourthly, for that they see many, which goe for religious men, to be poore, and not to thriue, as they doe, or desire to doe in the world; which they impute to their ouerstrictnesse in Religion; and therefore doe conclude with themselves, that to liue after the Rule of Gods Word, is the next way to beggery, which they will by their worldly courses preuent, if they can. But let vs beware of such Atheisticall thoughts, and be farre from these
imagi-

Deut. 8. 18.

Deut. 28.

Psal. 34. 8,
9, 10.

imaginations of Worldlings, first, because riches are from God, and not by man; man cannot make himselfe rich by any meanes, if Gods common blessing be not assistant thereto; experience also teacheth vs this; when wee see men industrious, yea, provident and wise, as others, yet can they not attaine the halfe that others come to. Secondly, because these outward blessings, even these are promised to such, as doe liue well and obey God. Thirdly, for that many men in liuing carefully to please God, and to serue him, haue come to great wealth, as we may reade of *Abraham, Isaac, Iacob, Ioseph, Iob, Boaz* here, *Dauid, Iehoshaphat*, and many others. Fourthly and lastly, for that men by their rebellion against God, haue lost great estates, and depriued themselues thereof, and their posterity by their wickednesse, as is euident in the example of *Saul, Ieroboam*, and others. And therefore let vs not thinke our worldly estate to become worse, by carefull liuing after Gods Lawes, but rather better and more sure, as *Iobs* was, about whom the Lord made a Hedge for his safety. And remember for a conclusion, that such as feare the Lord, shall want nothing that is good. *O taste, and see, saith Dauid, that the Lord is good! blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O feare the Lord, ye his Saints: for there is no want to them that feare him. The yong Lyons lacke and suffer hunger: but they that seeke the Lord, shall not want any good thing.* Note thirdly hence from these words of the kinsman, that the feare of worldly losse in a mans outward estate, maketh him neglect

neglect the Law of God, as this man doth here: for Gods Word preuaileth not, it hath not a commanding power ouer the conscience of a conetous man; because his heart is glewed to his riches, a base feare through vnbeliefe possesseth him, that he himselfe may come to want; and the loue of riches so bewitcheth him, as hee valueth them about the Lords Precepts, contrary to *Danids* account of Gods Word. That wee may become therefore obedient to Gods Law, let vs cast off this Atheisticall and Heathenish feare.

Luk. 18. 22, 23.

Psal. 119. 72.
103, 111. and
119.

Redeeme thou my right to thy selfe.] The kinsman is heere willing that *Boaz* should take his right: that, which before hee said hee would redeeme himselfe, now hee is contented that another should redeeme it. So *Worldlings* are content to yeeld sometimes their right vnto others, as namely that which they cannot come by, that which they cannot keepe, that which they cannot haue, but with more cost then the thing is worth; or when by getting a little, there is hazzard to lose much; and likewise that which for present feare they yeeld vnto, as *Benhadad* did restore Cities vnto *Ahab*, because he was in his hand, and in perill of his life, which hee would by that meanes redeeme. Otherwise *Worldlings* willingly forgoe nothing. Therefore their yeelding of their right at any time vpon the foresaid by-respect, is not thanks-worthy.

1. King. 20. 34.

For I cannot redeeme it.] None but can pretend some excuse or other why they doe not what they ought. In this man may we obserue two things:

Cc

incon-

Psal. 15.

inconstancie, and want of charity: for before, he would redeeme it, now he will not; before yea, now nay. *Three things make men inconstant*: first, leuirty of minde: this is a naturall infirmity, and to be pardoned. Secondly, ignorance, and want of fore-sight of the incoueniencies, which maketh him rash at first, and to repent afterwards, and so to change his mind, as this kinsman doth: this is somewhat excusable, though not altogether without blame: for a man is to doe that which is gone out of his mouth, though it be to his owne hinderance, if nothing else hinder the performance. Thirdly, dishonesty, which is, when a man maketh no conscience of any thing he saith or doth, but as hee seeth aduantage therein to himselfe; saying and gaine-saying, doing and vndoing as he seeth it to tend to his owne profit: this is flat knauerie, and iustly to be condemned. Of this we must take serious knowledge, and bewaile the first in vs, preuent the second by good consideration and deliberation, and hate the last, as detestable falshood and dishonestie, not to be practised among Christians. Vncharitablenesse in this kinsman herein appeareth, that he hath no care of the name of the dead, nor respect vnto the two poore widdowes, *Naomi* and *Ruth*; the land he loued & liked well, but the women he would haue nothing to do with; he had a mind to enrich himselfe in worldly substance, but he had no will to shew mercy to the poore: for a worldling thinkes himselfe borne for himselfe, seeking his owne good, but not the good of another,

other, contrary to the true propertie of charity. This vncharitablenesse must we take heed of, and abandon selfe-loue the true cause thereof; and labour for Charity, the Euidence of our Faith in God, and true Vnion with our Brethren in Christ.

1. Cor. 13.

Verse 7. Now this was the manner in former time in Israel, concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirme all things: a man plucked off his shoo, and gaue it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel.

THese words are a declaration of a Custome in Israel, and brought in heere to shew the reason of the Kinsman his drawing off his shoo in the verse following. In this, note the antiquitie of this Custome, also where, about what, to what end, what it was, and the ratification.

Now this was the manner in former time.] It was no new deuice, but an old custome, though no where in Scripture mentioned before. In commending this Custome from antiquitie, we see, that *Antiquity hath euer beene of credit to commend a thing vnto vs*: by this the Prophet commendeth Religion and Worship of God to the people; and by this preuailed the Scribes and Pharises with their traditions, by saying it was said of old, and done by the Forefathers. Thus the Papists seeke to grace their superstition and wil-worship: for that which is of old, hath many Approuers of al sorts, which maketh it to be of such estimation.

Ier. 6. 16.

Mat. 6.

Mat. 15.

Seeing this is so, let vs learne to know true Antiquity from counterfeite; the antiquity of truth, which is of God, and that of error, which is of the Diuell: and that which wee find to be antiquity of truth, that to vphold, and to reiect the other: so shall we approue of the truth of our Religion, as most ancient; and renounce Poperie, as a new nouelty, and a religion sprung vp but of late. This should also make vs to be warie, and to take good heed that we ascribe not the name of antiquity to any thing, but that which may bee proued to be sound and orthodoxe, yea, albeit being a thing but indifferent: lest if it bee euill, we, by attributing antiquitie thereunto, doe credit and adde confirmation vnto it, by speaking thereof as being ancient, and when we so informe others, when wee approue of it, and practise it, and instruct, teach, and allow our children so to thinke and doe, if the thing bee good and of approued antiquity, it is well done so to speake and practise; but if euill, wee doe amisse in misleading others, by graceing any way such a thing with the credit of antiquity, when as we rather should vse all meanes to disanull and cancell the same.

John. 18. 39.

Luke 2. 27, 42.

Ier. 44.

1. King. 17, 34.
40.

In Israel.] Old customes haue preuailed amongst Gods people, both ciuill and religious customes, and that both good and bad. Good the godly haue obserued, as did Ioseph and Marie. Bad the people haue followed, such as were and be addicted to the will of men, and to the examples of their forefathers, to great and learned mens practices, being led by their owne bringing vp to follow

follow the opinion of the most, and not to bee guided by the Law and Precepts of God. Thus were the high places kept vp in *Iuda*; the golden calues worshipped in *Dan* and *Bethel*: so popish customes hauing taken place, wee find hard to be remoued; and heathenish customes sometimes among the ignorant and vulgar people are kept and obserued in diuers things at some seasons of the yeere: of which in this cleare Light of the Gospell Christians should bee ashamed. Some customes are not to bee condemned simply, but only in regard of the abuse: as for friends to meet and feast, to make a feast at weddings, to reioyce, to sing, to play on instruments, yea, sometime to daunce, so it be that the Lords Day bee not prophaned, nor made the appointed day for these things, as most commonly it hath beene: for that day is set apart for better ends and holy purposes: also so that moderation be vsed hertin, as in feasting, to auoid drunkenesse and gluttonie; in myrth, wanton songs, lasciuious speeches, abuse of Gods Name and his Word; and in dauncing, the mixt companying of men and women: for in *Israel* the women daunced together, and the men alone: as for the other, it is an allurements to vanity and folly, as daily experience may teach them that impudently will gaine-say the same. So then let vs distinguish customes, and as they be good, so vse them; if otherwise, cut them off, and suffer not an vngodly custome to haue any authority, or to bee a law in thine heart: for oftentimes euill customes do ouermaster good customes. Where-

Iud. 14. 16.

Ier. 31. 4.
Esa. 58. 13.

Iud. 11. 34 and
21. 31
1. Sam. 18. 6.
Ier. 31. 13.

fore let *Hagar* bee expelled, that the promised seed may haue his right and place. *or y^e babing*

Concerning redeeming, and concerning changing.] Of redeeming Land, buying and selling, before hath beene spoken; heere is mention of the exchange of one for another, as *Abah* offered vnto *Naboth*; in which, as in the other, equity is to be obserued. These words brought in here, shew about what matters this ancient custome was obserued, namely, in and about matters of the world. In which they had their libertie, as wee haue now in these things, and not to bee found fault with or disallowed; neither need men to haue any scruple in vsing them, nor to call them into question, when they see not therein any apparent impietie, or grosse superstition.

For to confirme all things.] to wit, which was done or spoken touching the redemption or change. So heere is the end of the Ceremonie, for ciuill vse, not for superstition; it was for confirmation and establishing of the right of one vpon another: for *Custome is as a Law, binding one to another, in that which is done according to that custome.* It is good therefore to take heed how we settle a custome.

A man plucked off his shoe, and gaue it to his neighbour.] This was the custome, or the cere-
monie vsed according to the custome then in *Israel* about such things. *Seuerall countreyes haue seuerall customes.* Wee deliuer vp our right, by taking vp a piece of Earth, and doe lay it vpon the deed or writing, when wee giue vp our right in free-

free-hold; in some places by a straw in copie-hold land; some pull off a gloue: here is plucking off a shoo, to signifie by the shooe, his right to the land; by plucking off, his will to forgoe it; by giving it to his Neighbour, the resigning of his right: so as the ceremonie liuely setteth out the thing. But it will be asked, *Why was a shoo used in this?* It may be, to note that the man acknowledged hereby, that now hee had no right to set his foote vpon it without the leaue of the other; according to that with vs, no man hauing a right, without the Owners good will, so much as to walke ouer another mans ground; but if hee will, he may commence a sute against him *de pedibus ambulandis*: but such extremity is vtterly void of charity, and to bee hated among Christians.

And this was a testimonie in Israel.] This act made good the bargaine of sale or exchange in Israel: for a common custome maketh sure a thing deliuered according to that custome, where it is of force and vse. The practice of that custome shall testifie against them, and confirme their deed, where that custome is in vse: for many customes are in many places, and doe differ. Let therefore such a custome be carefully obserued, and beware of the breach thereof.

Verse 8. *Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoo.*

THis is a conclusion of the bargaine betweene them. Shewing what the kinsman both spake and did, graunting *Boaz* libertie to buy it, and obseruing the custome then amongst them, to ratifie the same, in the resigning of his right.

Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz.] That is, because he said he could not redeeme it, hee saith to *Boaz*, Buy thou it: and because the custome was so, he drew off his shoo: for this word *therefore* hath reference to both clauses. Heere is a worldly man, yet hee dealeth in the resigning of his right very honestly, and so, as by Law and custome, the same might be confirmed and made good to *Boaz*. Hereby we see, that some men out of common honesty being worldlings, will so passe away their right to another, as it shall stand good by Law to them: for they will obserue in such things morall honesty; they loue their credit before men, they care to preferue such iust dealing for their more free commerce with others, and to prevent future troubles, which they might occasion otherwise by any trick of dishonesty, when it should appeare. This we find true by experience among our selues, which is very praise-worthy; and a condemning of such as pretend a greater shew of pietie, but haue not halfe the honesty, which some ciuill worldly men haue: for if wee passe an estate to any, why should wee not make the

the purchase good to the utmost according to Law? Honesty and equity require it at our hands, if wee bee not deceiuers, as some be, who make sale of that which secretly they haue conueyed to others before: which practice, yea and euery such like deceitfull dealing, is very theft and damned villanie.

Buy it for thee.] Before, the kinsman in verse 6. willet *Boaz* to redeeme it to himselfe; he ergo hoc saith, Buy it: so that to redeeme, was to buy the inheritance; of which somewhat in the next verse.

So hee drew off his shoe.] Thus hee obserued the custome, to confirme the right vnto *Boaz*. Two things are here done to put ouer his right, first, his word, and then his deed: one was not enough to conuey it ouer vnto *Boaz*, therefore both are conioyned. So doth the Lord deale with vs in giuing vs a right in the eternall Inheritance; he giueth first his Word, then, his Deed, setting to his Hand and Seale, to confirme his Word, which internally is the Spirit and heavenly graces thereof, externally the Sacraments: so that which is bought by Christ, is conueyed vnto vs. God giueth vs good assurance, as heere the kinsman to *Boaz*. *Good assurance is to bee given and taken in passing of right from one to another.* It is honesty on the one side, and wisdom on the other. And therefore heerein let vs be both honest and wise. But now for plucking off the shoe, wee must know that we find it two wayes vsed, religiously and ciuilly. Religiously, in reuerence to God,

Ier. 31.

Gen. 23. 18.
Ier. 32. 6, 7, 8.

Exod. 3. 5.
Iosh. 5. 15.

2. Sam. 15. 30.

Esaï. 60. 2.

Deut. 25. 9.

Deut. 25.

God; as did *Isaiah* and *Ioshua* in drawing neere vnto him: which signifieth the putting off of soule and carnall affections, and to draw neere with a pure heart vnto God: and in witness of great humility, as *Dauid* did, acknowledging a sensible feeling of the heauie hand of God, and his afflicted estate then, which by sinne hee had iustly brought vpon himselfe. Ciuilly this plucking or putting off the shoo was first, for conueniencie to wash the feete; next, for confirmation of sale of land, as heeres; and thirdly, for disgrace, when the kinsman would not performe the part of a kinsman, according to the Law of *Moses*. This is not here meant; for by the Law, the woman, after she had claimed marriage of the kinsman privately, then also shee complained to the Magistrate; if the kinsman should refuse to doe the office of a kinsman, then is she to plucke off his shoo, & spit in his face; which some expound, to spit before his face. But here is a voluntary plucking off of his owne shoo: and also the former verse sheweth it to be a custome touching redeeming and changing; and thereupon the kinsman vseth it to resigne his right, and to confirme it vnto *Boaz*: & not as an act of disgrace to himselfe, for not yeelding to doe the kinsmans part, which was not claimed at his hands by *Ruth* either privately or before authority: and therefore I take that this putting off the shoo, and that spoken of in the Law of *Moses*, are not one and the same.

Verse

Verse 9. And Boaz said unto the Elders, and unto all the people, Iee are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelechs, and all that was Chilions and Mahlons, of the hand of Naomi.

Boaz heere taketh witness of that which is done: the witnesses are the Elders and the people; the matter which they are to be witnesses of, is the sale of all the land of Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon; and the purchase thereof at Naomi her hand; the Kinsman resigning his right to him, that hee might buy it to himselfe.

And Boaz said unto the Elders, and unto all the people. Boaz esteemeth of the Elders, as men in authority: but yet hee neglecteth not the people, whom also hee calleth vpon to be witnesses also; this was his wisdom to procure loue of all, as appeareth by their prayer made for him afterwards, verse the 11. Heere in this verse and the rest following, we may see the happy successe of that which Boaz tooke in hand: for it was a good matter, for a good end, and done in a right manner. Now, when a thing which is lawfull, is taken in hand, and done well, to a right end, there may bee expected a good issue: as may bee seene in Daniels setting vpon Goliath; it was an honorable attempt, the manner of his proceeding was lawfull, hee waited for it, and had publicke authority to set him forward, and the end was Gods glory, and safety of Israel: for God is with such, and his power shall assist them, and his fauour shall giue them good

2. Sam. 6. 6.
1. Chro. 15. 13.
1. Cor. 11.

good successe, as hee promiseth vnto such. And therefore if wee would prosper, let vs obserue these things in our attempts: for if the end bee good in thy intendment, and the thing vnlawful, the act is sinnefull; if the matter bee good, and the end sinister, this marreth the matter: but if the matter and end bee as they should be, yet if the manner be amisse, wee may for this miscarry, as we see in *Dauids* remouing of the Arke. This let vs obserue in comming to the Word and Sacrament.

Ye are witnesses this day.] Boaz saith, that they are witnesses, for that they saw and heard what was done at that time, in that assembly betweene him and the kinsman; so as we see, that *what men come for, and are called to see and heare, that are they witnesses of*: so saith he, and they also confesse it, in verse the 11. By this may wee know who to produce for fit witnesses in a matter: such as personally are seers and hearers of that which they testifie; and as they bee fit witnesses, so then are they sound and faithfull, if they will truely and without respect of person affirme that for truth, which they know to be so: for it is one thing to be a fit witnesse, in respect of a mans knowledge; and another thing to bee a faithfull witnesse, to speake truely what he knoweth. Seeing what we see and heare, maketh vs fit to bee produced for witnesses, when occasion shall serue, let vs in matters of moment, for vpholding of truth, iustice, and peace, obserue well, what we doe see, and heare, that we may be true and faithfull witnesses,

nesses, to maintaine truth, iustice, and peace, without all partiality.

That I haue bought all that was Elimelechs, and all that was Chillions and Mahlons.] Here is shewed whereof they were witnesses: one thing is here specified, the other in the next verse. This heere is of the purchase of land, whereunto hee calleth them to bee witnesses, for better confirmation of the land, and the right thereof to himselfe: for witnesses are for to establish a matter. So wee see in Boaz a care to make sure the estate. A wise man will seeke to make sure that which hee purchaseth, as Abraham also did, and Ieremie, who had for confirmation of the land, first, the euidence drawne, then, the same sealed: thirdly, the same done according to Law and custome: and lastly, before witnesses. Thus the Scripture commendeth vnto vs a care herein from these examples: it is wisdom and prudence to secure our estates in the best manner, so it be iust and honest: for so shall wee preuent future contentions, which caste might rise about it. And if euer men had cause to looke about them in any age, now they haue: for it may be said, as Ieremie said in his time, Take yee heed every one of his Neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will wilyly supplant. Heere may bee noted Boaz his vprightnesse also, who desireth to haue others to take notice of his doings, and to haue that publike, which should be publike: for an honest mind is desirous to be publike, where the matter requireth it, as in buying and selling of land, in the course of iustice, in the Ministry

Deut. 19. 15.

Gen. 23.
Ier. 32. 10, 11, 25.

Ier. 9. 4.

1. Theſ. 4.

Gen. 23.

1. King. 16. 24.

Leuit. 27. 21.

Gen. 33. 19.

2. Sam. 24.

Leuit. 25. 14.

15, 16, 17, 25.

Ministry of the Word, in solemnizing of marriage, and such like. It argueth an honest intention, not caring who seeth it; it will cleare him of the slander or suspicion of fraud and circumuention. And therefore in such cases labour to bee publike: for onely they which do euill, or intend it, hate the light: honest minds care not who seeth them. It is no good signe of a good intent, when buyers will marke in secret to buy lands of others, of such as bee young prodigals, or old Spendthrifts, or such as must sell for need; for those hope to make a prey, and to get that for a little, which is worth much; but such gaine is vniust: and where fraud and oppression is, there will God be an Auenger. Lastly, note hence, that *it is lawfull for a rich man to buy land of others, when it is offered*, as here, when as also need is of some parcell for a speciall vse, as *Abraham* did buy a burying place, and *Omri* the hill of Samaria: and when it is for good vses, as for the maintenance of Gods publike Worship, to build an Altar, as *Jacob* and *Dauid* did: so now to buy land for maintenance of the Word, for Scholes of learning, for Hospitals, and to set poore on worke. Againe, hee may buy, to helpe a poore man, that for need must make sale to supply his want with money: but such a purchase must bee made in mercy, in great equity, and without oppression, in the feare of God. And thirdly, when the saleman is his kinsman, then to buy, as a friend and kinsman, to preferue the land in their name, but especially to do the kinsman good, & that in two things:

things: in giuing to the vtmost what it is worth, and in being ready at all times to let him redeeme it againe, if euer hee shall bee able. Thus may a rich-landed man buy land: but heere hee must take heed, first, that he intice not others to make sale of their estates, which bee not willing thereto, as *Ahab* did, which wrought that mischief which afterwards insued. Secondly, that hee make not a prey of a poore man, nor of any other, which standeth in need to sell. Thirdly, that hee buy not vpon a greedy desire, and an insatiable couetousnesse, to haue all about him: for the Prophet denounceth a woe and iudgements against such. Fourthly, that hee buy not in the dayes of a generall calamity, but rather imploy his money in workes of mercy: this was a vertue in *Nehemiah*. They therefore erre, who thinke they may buy as much as they can, if they haue money, conceiuing no other vse thereof, but to buy and purchase therewith only for themselues, to make themselues great. And this reproveth those, which are so greedy of buying land, as they runne into the Vsurers bookes, and borrow what they may, to purchase, till the vse of the money eate vp a good part of the land, & themselues at the last become beggars, and so leave their children poore, their friends in bonds, and not a few lenders, perhaps, in the lurch: such is the fruit of greedy couetousnesse. But, wee may say, as it is lawfull to buy, so is it lawfull to sell. True, of which before somewhat is spoken already, yet heere a little more of the same matter. A man may

1. King. 21. 2, 4.

Leuit. 25. 14.

Esaie. 5. 8, 9, 10.

Nehem. 5. 16.

Gen. 47. 18, 20.

Mark. 5. 25.

2. King. 4. 7.

Gen. 33. & 33.
2. Sam. 24.Act. 2. 45. and
4. 36, 37. & 5. 1.

may sell, to sustaine his pouerty happening by Gods hand, as did the Egyptians; to recouer their liuelihood and health, as did the diseased woman; to pay debts, as did the poore widdow, to be free from bondage, and to saue her life: for goods and lands are for our vse: and liberty, life, health, and credit are more to bee esteemed then any lands or possessions. A man may also sell to others for their need, as Ephron sold to Abraham a field, Hamor to Iacob, and Araunah to David. And thirdly, for to relieue the want of their brethren, as they did in the Primitiue Church. In such cases may men sell, but not to vphold prodigality, whoredome, idlenesse, pride and vanity.

Of the hand of Naomi. The right, it may seeme, of all the lands of these thre, was in Naomi her hands, when they dyed childlesse. Thus the Law left her well, as our Law doth many widdowes now, and the loue of kind husbands. But that too many widdowes waxe wanton, and doe, in following their lust and fantasie, ouerthrow themselves, and their estates too; they follow not this holy and modest Matron, who sought no marriage for her selfe in her old age (as some with vs doe, to their shame) but shee had care for her beloued daughter in law, *Ruth*. If shee had such lands to sell, may some say, why liued shee so poorely, and suffered *Ruth* to goe and gleane, and liue vpon the almes of *Boaz*? *Naomi* had not the possession of these lands, being sold away before, but the right first to redeeme, if shee had beene

booke able, which shee put ouer to Boaz, when the Kinsman refused to redeeme them, and so to helpe Ruth in her marriage.

Verse 10. *Moreover, Ruth the Moabiteſſe, the wife of Mahlon, haue I purchaſed to bee my wife, to raiſe vp the name of the dead vpon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: yee are witneſſes this day.*

Boaz relateth the ſecond thing of which they were to be witneſſes, which was concerning his marriage: where note, firſt, with whom. Secondly, how obtained. Thirdly, to what end, is double. And fourthly, the calling of them againe to witneſſe it.

Moreover, Ruth the Moabiteſſe.] This was ſhee whom he had promiſed to marry, and whom hee now went about to make ſure to him, though ſhe were a Moabiteſſe. Here it may bee demanded, whether perſons of diuers religions may marry together? Anſw. If they be conuerted, they may: ſo Moſes married Iethroes daughter, Salomon Rahab, and Boaz Ruth heere, and Sheſhan married his daughter to his ſervant an Egyptian: but otherwiſe they may not, God forbade it his people, ſuch matches were condemned; the Yoke is vnequall, as Saint Paul ſpeaketh: it was reſproued in Eſau, and herein was hee a grieſe voto to his parents. This is not to marry in the Lord; it is dangerous to the ſoule, if the heart ſhould bee drawne from

Dd

God,

1. Chron. 2. 34.
See Zipper. de
Lege Moſi. li. 4.
cap. 18. 12. 13.
Deut. 7. 3.
Eſd. 10.
Nehem. 13.
2. Cor. 6. 14.
Gen. 27.

1. King. 11. 1.
Nehc. 13. 26.
Deut. 4. 7.
2. Chro. 19. 2. &
21. 6, 13.

Gen. 24.

Hof. 12. 12.
Gen. 28. & 29.

Prou. 31.

Pro. 31. 30.

God, as was *Salomon*; and such matches hath God cursed, as we may see in *Isaiah* match-
ing his sonne with *Abahs* daughter; it had all
most rooted out his whole House. Fathers and
Councils doe condemne it, and therefore be-
ware of making such matches.

The wife of Mahlon. See for this before, Chap.
1. 4. and in this Chapter verse the 5. where *Ruth*
is called the wife of the dead; and here shewed to
bee *Mahlon* the Elder brother to *Chilion* the hus-
band of *Orpha*, who by her apostasie lost her bles-
sing in Israel, which *Ruth* obtained by her con-
stancie.

Have I purchased to be my wife. We see hence, a
good man will be at cost to obtaine a good wife: *Abra-
ham* will send farre a messenger to this purpose
with Camels loaden, and with Jewels of siluer
and gold: *Jacob* will serue seven yeeres and seven
too; but he will haue *Rachel*; *Boaz* here will pur-
chase a poore *Ruth* for her vertues: for indeed a
vertuous womans price is aboute Rubies, shee
will doe her husband good all his dayes, shee is
worthy therefore the getting, and worthy to bee
honestly maintained: and yet wee see most care
least for such an one; but they will labour and
spare no cost to get one that is faire, though
beautie be deceitfull vanity, and sometime such
a one not ouer-honest; or one rich, louing the
portion better than the partie, marrying basely,
and after liuing discontented; or for birth and
friends, when the one listeth vp the heart with
pride, and the other becommeth chargeable.

Beautie

Beautie maketh not blessed; but vertue; not goods, but grace; not naturall generation; but spirituall regeneration; not friends heere; but the sweet fauour of God, which hee onely affordeth vnto the vertuous. See further from hence the loue of *Naomi* to *Ruth*, who giueth her right to *Boaz* to redeeme the land for advancement of *Ruth*: for *louing parents will doe much for the preferment of their children*. *Naomi* heere liueth vnmarried, shee doth all shee may to get *Ruth* a good match, for her owne sake, and in loue to the dead, that of her may be gotten one to beare the name of the dead, as *Boaz* speaketh in the words following. Which honest and louing care of *Naomi* checketh such widdowes, as being well left by the dead, doe either of couetousnesse and carelesnesse, neglect to marry their children, lining onely for themselves; or else of a wanton lust doe cast themselves away vpon such as will both vndo them and their children.

To raise up the name of the dead vpon his inheritance. Of these words somewhat is spoken before on verse the 51 which I will not repeat. Here *Boaz* alledgeth these words as a reason of his marrying this young woman; they are the words of the Law in Deuteronomie, and so are the next following; to which Law *Boaz* had respect in thus matching with *Ruth*: from whom we learne these things; First, that *a wise man will preuent an offence, which by others might bee taken at him, when hee considers the occasion thereof*: for *Boaz* telleth them the true ends of his marrying thus, lest the

Deut. 25. 6, 7.

Num. 25.

Ecclef. 7. 1.
Prou. 32. 10.1. Cor. 10. 32.
Mat. 18.

Beholders and Hearers should haue censured ill of him, as of lecherie, he being old, and she yong; or of folly, she being poore, and he rich; she base, and he honourable; or of an inclining in her to idolatry, he being an Israelite, and shee a daughter of Moab, of that race, which incited Israel to sinne, and brought a great iudgement vpon the people. And this hee did for the care and credit of his name, which is highly to be esteemed, and in loue vnto those there gathered before him, in whom hee would preuent the offence, which on their behalfe might be taken, though not on his part giuen. And thus must wee learne to doe: both to beware of offences to all sorts; and also where wee perceiue that any might take an offence, there wisely to preuent it in them, if wee can, and not bee like such as giue themselves to all licentious libertie to liue as they list, as almost euery one doth in these dayes; not caring for a good name of a graue and sober Christian, or of adorning their holy profession, or of displeasing the godly minds of others; but to liue onely like Libertines after their owne lusts, opening the mouthes of the Aduersaries to speake ill of the Gospell of God. Secondly, from Boaz wee may learne, that a godly man in his marrying is guided by Gods Law, and hath respect vnto Gods good pleasure therein: so had Abraham in matching his sonne Isaac, and Isaac in marrying of his sonne Iacob: for such as be godly, make the Lords Will & Word their Rule in all things, much more in a matter of this weight and consequence; they know it

to be Gods ordinance, and therefore will aduise with God about it: yea, they know that God hath not left men herein to their liberty and lust, to marry as they like best; but hath limited them, and in his Vword hath taught them with whom, how, and to what end to marry. And therefore in marrying we must be ruled by the Lord, which will appeare by these things: If we see what calling wee haue to marry, before wee enter into this troublesome estate, as Reason and Religion should perswade vs; If we see that wee haue a iust cause to marry, then to consider with whom God alloweth vs to marry; If we seeke out such a one, as not onely with whom we may marry lawfully, but also fitly: & therefore to pray earnestly to God for such a one: for God maketh fit matches; and a vertuous woman is his gift. It is a happy thing to match fitly, and more hard then to match lawfully. If lastly, we vse marriage as God hath appointed, for increase of posterity, and to auoid fornication, the first end was before the fall, the latter after; and withall for mutuall society, helpe and comfort, which one ought to haue with another: which cannot be, except there bee fitnesse, grace, true loue, humilitie and patience. But who are thus led by the Lord in their marrying? Men seeke wiues now without any respect to Gods will and pleasure: they follow the lusts of the eyes, the lusts of the flesh, and pride of life. Thirdly, we may obserue how *the vertuous are so match so, as they may raise up a seed of the righteous among Gods people: for the preservation*

Gen. 2.

Gen. 2.

1. Cor. 7.

Heb. 4. 2. and
11. 6.

Pfal. 14.

1. Iohn 2. 4.
Iames 2. .

of the Church and Religion, as Boaz heere had a care to raise vp the name of the dead vpon his inheritance. But this cannot the married doe, except they themselues be true Louers of goodnesse, and haue a speciall care to traine vp their children religiously, first, in knowledge of God, else are they Atheists; of the true God, else Heathenish Idolaters; and of the true worship of this God, else but will-worshippers: then to enforme them in the Doctrin of faith, without which grace they can neuer profit by the Word, nor euer please God; the summe of which beliefe is set downe in the Articles of our Creed. Next, to teach them how to pray aright; which is the meanes to conferre with God, to speake to him, to obtaine blessings from him, and without the practise whereof men are but as beasts, and a marke of such as thinke there is no God. The summe of our prayer, and the perfect rule of direction for matter, and manner, and end, is set downe by our Sauour Christ. Lastly, to teach them obedience, and to walke in Gods Commandements, without which, all knowledge and faith is vaine: the summe of what we are to obey, is in the ten Commandements, which children must be taught and instructed in. Here may be noted this also from the words, that *the dead doe liue againe, as it were in their posterity, which keepe their inheritance:* for children and the preseruacion of their fathers inheritance, doe keepe aline the name of the dead. Therefore let children haue a care hereof, lest they destroy the name of the dead,

dead, as many prodigall children doe.

That the name of the dead bee not cut off from among his brethren.] This is another end, the other being the meanes to preuent this: for the raising vp of the name of the dead, preuenteth the cutting of it off from among the brethren. Concerning the word *brethren*, hereby is meant others than very naturall brethren: for the people of God before and vnder the Law, as in the Primitive Church vnder the Gospell, were wont to call one another brethren, of which I haue spoken before out of the third verse. For *cutting off*: this may bee when one will not marry to haue children, or marrying, are not blessed of God with children, or hauing children, are cut off by Gods iust iudgement, and so the name perisheth, as it befell *Ieroboam*, *Ahab*, *Iehoiakim*, and as God doth threaten the obstinate sinner in Deuteronomie. Howsoever this cutting off be of posterity, we may learne hence, that *the decay of posterity, is a cutting off of a mans name from among his brethren*, as the words heere and in the Law imply. And therefore let people pray for this blessing of marriage, and thanke God for their posterity and fruit of the wombe. *Abraham* most highly esteemed hereof; and the Psalmist maketh it a reward to such as feare God: yea, children are a crowne to the old men; and it was a heauy curse vpon *Iehoiakim* to be made childlesse; and it was threatened in the Law as a punishment for sinne. They be much to blame then, which do marry of purpose with such as they thinke are past bearing

1. King. 14. 10.
2. King. 9. 8.
Ier. 22. 30. and
36. 30.
Deu. 29. 18, 19.
Deut. 25. 6.

Gen. 15. 2.
Psal. 127. 3. and
128. 3.

Ier. 36. 30. and
22. 30.
Leuit. 20. 20.

of children, or with others apt for children, but yet in heart desire to haue none, or perhaps but one or two, rather to dally with, than to be troubled with: but such children often proue a scourge to these parents, through their foolish affection and too great indulgencie, because they haue no more.

And from the gate of his place.] These words shew that *Elimelech* was a man of authority among them, an Elder and Iudge in the Gate, which honour *Boaz* would vphold in marrying with *Ruth*, that his name might not bee cut off from the place of authority, heere vnderstood by the Gate. *Good men seek to vphold the honour, & to preserve the dignitie of one another,* as the fifth Commandement teacheth: which being our duty, wee must care to obserue, both to the dead and to the liuing. To the dead, as *Boaz* doth heere: now their honour we preserve, when we speake of them with honour, as *Dauid* did of *Abner*; when wee maintaine their good name against calumnies and slanderous reports; & when we imitate their vertues, and seeke to vphold their posterity, especially when they shall deserue well, and follow the steps of the dead in well-doing. Thus shall wee truly and with praise preserve their honour, though we doe not as the Papists dedicate dayes in honour of them, and make them Intercessours to God for vs, to the great dishonour of Christ. And as we should maintaine the honour of the dead, so should wee the honour of the liuing, by acknowledging their dignity, in age,

age, place and gifts; by speaking thereof as is meet, without enuy or disdain, and by doing reuerence in our outward behauiour according to their dignity. Heere may also bee noted, that *men of place and authority may soone leaue their family in a low estate*: for *Elimelechs* wife was poore *Naomi*, and glad of the helpe of her daughter in lawes gleanings. How poore was the widdow left, for whose reliefe the Prophet *Elisha* wrought a miracle, being, as is supposed by some, the wife of an honourable man, *Obadiab*, *Ahabs* Steward, who did feed an hundred Prophets of God in *Caves*, in the time of famine? This may fall out sometime by Gods hand in punishing the fathers, that they can leaue nothing to children; sometime for triall, as in *Iobs* case, who was brought to great misery; and sometime a mans owne doings may bring him vnder the power of authority, which may iustly depriue him of his honor and estate, as it befell *Abiathar* in the daies of *Salomon*. Let not men bee therefore proud of their parents present glory; an alteration may soone come, as we see in *Ieroboam* and *Baasha*, in *Ahab*, *Iehoram*, and *Iezabel*; in *Haman* also, *Athaliah*, and others: for Gods power, Princes authority, and a mans owne way, may soone bring downe his greatnesse, and also a ruine vpon his whole house.

Yee are witnesses.] That is, as if *Boaz* had said, not onely of the sale and purchase of the land, but also of this my marriage with this yong woman, *Ruth*: which here we see to be publike, and in the

Gate

2.King. 4.

1.King. 18.3.

1.King. 2.26,
27.

Psal. 75.6,7.

Iohn 2.

Gate of the Citie, in a ciuill Court and place of iustice. Whence uote, First, that *marriages are to be made publicly before sufficient witnesses*, as was *Iacobs*, this here, and that to which our Sauour was bidden. This is fit for the honour of marriage, for the better ratification thereof, and to preuent pretences of marriages: for if marriages were not publicke, but priuately huddled vp, some might pretend marriage, and liue together as man and wife in shew, and yet be but lewd liuers: so others wearie of one another, might say they were not married, and so vnlawfully separate themselues. Therefore let marriages be publicke, and in a publicke place, as here it was, and as now by our Lawes we bee bound thereto; and auoid priuate making of marriages, and in corners, for they are often made in haste, and end vnhappyly. Secondly, that *marriage in old time was onely a ciuill action*: there was no need of a Minister to make it, it was lawfully and sufficiently done, when it was made openly, by such as might marry, among the people, as we may see in the marriage of *Isaac*, of *Iacob*, *Esaue*, *Sarnson*. Which confuteth the Papists that make marriage a Sacrament, as if marriage were onely lawfull in the Church, and not among the very heathen: when yet from the beginning it is common to all mankind, and allowed to all sorts. True it is, that we doe make such marriages lawfull onely when ministers make them, but this is not with a papistical opinion of a Sacrament, nor for that our Church condemneth marriages otherwise made
in

in other nations, as vnlawfull, but the Church and State haue so ordained, for the greater reuerence to Gods ordinance, when his Ministers shall blesse the same, in the publike Congregation, with the prayers of the Church; and when they shall teach them their dueties, which doe marry: Thus gracing Gods holy ordinance by their praying and preaching, the one for benediction, the other for instruction, and therefore worthily ordained, and so of vs to be religiously obserued.

Verse 11. And all the people that were in the Gate, and the Elders said, We are witnesses: The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house, like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: And doe thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem.

THe Assembly make answer vnto Boaz: first, acknowledging themselues to bee witnesses; and then praying for a blessing vpon the woman, and then vpon him: that shee may be louely and fruitfull, and he to doe so worthily, that hee may come to be renowned.

And all the people that were in the Gate, and the Elders said.] In so great a company (no doubt) differing in nature and conditions, yet wee see heere how they doe all agree before Boaz to applaud him; may it be imagined, that none had a by-thought to see an old man to marry a young woman, one rich and noble, to take a poore and
meane

2. Sam. 3. 36.

Reue. 12.

meane maiden? Yet before him all say well vnto it: for *great men haue to their faces great countenance and applause of the people, in that they take in hand.* The people will like all that *Dauid* doth: so will foure hundred prophets allow of *Ahabs* purpose to goe to battell against the Syrians to recouer Ramoth-Gilead: for people feare to offend, they desire to please their betters. And therefore this should teach those of place and wealth, vpon whom many doe depend, to take heed what they doe: for they may set others on to godlinesse, and they may moue others vnto wickednesse; they cannot fall themselues alone, but be like the great Dragon, with their taile pulling many downe with them. Let *Dauid* set vp Religion, multitudes will follow him to the House of God. Let *Ieroboam* set vp Idols and Deuils, the Israelites will worship them. Let *Ahab* worship *Baal*, all will doe so; and let *Iehu* destroy him, and they will helpe him to doe it. People are like a shaddow, following authority; like waxe also, which will take any print. In themselves are nothing, but allow and disallow, as they see great Ones doe before them. And therefore let no men of place regard their applause, thinking that well done, which the Vulgars approue or flattering dependants: for they will not speake as the truth is, but to humour persons; not what they thinke to be right, but what they know another liketh of, and would haue them say.

[Wee are witnesses.] That is, wee acknowledge our

our selues to bee so as thou sayest; wee are witness
ses, and will vpon any iust occasion bee ready to
shew our selues for. Whence note, that *what men*
are called to witnesse, being either eye or eare witnesses
thereof, or both, thus should they bee ready to testifie,
as these heere profess themselves to bee, and as
did the Israelites, in the behalfe of *Samuel*, before
the Lords Anoynted. *A faithfull witnesse, saith*
Salomon, will not lye. And therefore let vs in such
a case bee ready and faithfull witnesses, for the
truth sake, for iustice and peace sake among our
brethren. Many times ready and faithfull wimel
ses preuent suites and keepe peace, where other
wise there would be strife and contention. This
reprooueth those, which being able sufficiently to
beare witnesse, yet for feare of displeasing will
not; these want seruent loue of the truth, and
offend against the Commandements, which
bind men to preserue the dignitie, life, chastity,
goods and good name of our Neighbours. Now,
if any of these be endangered, and wee by our
witness might set them free, and will not, we are
guiltie thereof. Again, this checketh, or rather
condemneth those that for fauour will either
adde or detract in their witness bearing, so see
king to please man, and so displease God, giuing
a deadly wound to their owne consciences.
Thirdly, such as doe speake onely what is done
and said, bur yet to another end and meaning
than was intended, as *Doeg* dealt with *Abimelech*,
and the false witnesses against Christ. These wic
ked persons sinne against the Commandement,
they

Exod. 20.
Deut. 19.
Leuit. 19.
1 Sam. 12. 45.

Prou. 6. 19. and
12. 22.

Deu. 19. 16, 19.

Prou. 19. 9.

Gen. 24. 60.

Gen. 5.

they trespass in one of the foure finnes, which
God hath, and are an abomination to the
Lord: who ordained in the Law a punish-
ment answerable to that, which by their false
witness should haue bene inflicted vpon ano-
ther. Such God threatneth to punish: for they
offend greatly, they hinder the true course of
iustice, they deceiue the Iudge, they hurt their
Neighbour, and they abuse the holy Name of
God, which they call to witnesse falsely. Let men
therefore take heed hercof.

10. The Lord make the woman. Here they begin
to pray for them, and all ioyntly together. Of
praying to God I haue before spoken; here far-
ther may be obserued, First, that marriage is to be
solemnized with prayer, and others are to pray for the
married parties, as these doe here, and Rebekah,
Isaac and her mother did for *Isaac*, and as our
Church ordaineth now at marriages; and that
for these three causes. First for the holinesse of the
action, being Gods holy ordinance, and an ho-
norable estate, instituted in Paradise, and in the
time of innocencie, and so be therefore underta-
ken holily and reverently with supplication and
prayer vnto God. Next, for the unholinesse of
our persons is not selves, who by our corruption
pollute the ordinance of God, and as wee bee of
Adams race, so haue we our children conceived
in sinne, and brought forth in iniquity, and be-
get such as be after our owne likeness: wee haue
cause then to pray, and that feruently to God to
bless and shew mercy vnto vs. And thirdly, for the

the troublefomeſſe of the teſtate of marriage; which may cauſe vs to pray heartily for it is full of temptations and trials. And therefore let it moue vs to pray for them, after the example of the people here, and theſe Elders; and not be like ſuch, as at the time of marriage ſolely ſtand ſtaring and looking on, or through vaine thoughts doe laugh and make a ſport thereof, or elſe ſpend their thoughts vpon the delight of future vanities, dauncing, drinking, lewd ſongs and ribaldries, moſt heatheniſh than Chriſtian-like. And if others are to pray for the married parties, then much more ſhould they pray for themſelues: but alas, how farre are moſt from it, hauing their thoughts ſpent vpon vanities. Secondly note, that in publicke prayer the aſſembly ſhould be of one accord: as all theſe were here, both the Elders and people, as alſo elſewhere. This is vnto vs, and the other conſolation, when people are ſeriously exerciſed than in giuing their aſſent to that which is publicly performed. *Thou wilt ſay, that is come into mine houſe.* That is either already comes, or that certainly ſhall come, as if ſhee were already in the houſe. This ſheweth the cohabitation of man and wife, and that they are to dwell together, as Peter ſpeaketh, and God placed the firſt man and wife together in Paradiſe, and Abraham and Sarah liued together; ſo did Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and his wives, and ſo did David with his. And this is fit and neceſſary for mutuall comfort and ſociety; therefore the Apoſtles tooke their wives with them, and it is for this

2. Chron. 5. 13.
Nehem. 8.
Acts 1. 14. and
2. 46. and 4. 29.

1. Pet. 3. 7.
1. Cor. 7. 5.

2. Sam. 6. 20.

1. Cor. 9. 5.

this cause altogether a fault, when any wilfully live separated from their wives, or any vnnecessarily without a calling, out of an idle leuerty, will become Trauellers into other countries after they bee married: when the Apostle warneth them not to defraud one another, except with consent, and that but for a time, and for this end, to giue themselves to fasting and prayer, and then come together againe, lest Satan tempt them to incontinencie.

Like Rachel and Leah. Rachel is first named, because shee was Jacobs wife first by couenant, and his best beloved. Two wiues he had: and it is not lawfull to haue one wife after another: as Abraham had Keturah after Sarah: for they that cannot abstaine, it is better to marry, than to burne; and when the one is departed, the other is free to marry againe in the Lord. And therefore it is an hereticall opinion to forbid second marriages, which the godly practised, and the Apostle alloweth vpon good reasons. But to haue two wiues at once is not lawfull: for it is contrary to the Lords first institution of marriage, who ioyned together but one man and one woman: it is against the Apostles Doctrine, who teacheth euery man to haue his owne wife, and euery woman her owne husband. And wee may reade of the first offenders, how one was out of the Church a blasphemous Lamech, and the other in the Church a prophane Esau. And albeit holy me had many wiues, it was their fault; God onely being pleased to passe it over in his mercie: but
allow

1. Cor. 7. 9. 36.

Gen. 2.

1. Cor. 7.

Ge. 4. & 26. 34.

allow thereof hee did not, as appeareth by the Prophet *Malachies* words: And therefore are they not herein to bee followed. It is a blessed Law, which of late time hath beene enacted in this Nation, against marrying two wiues at once. In praying that *Ruth* might bee first like *Rachel*, who was amiable and louely to *Iacob*; and then like *Leah*, who was fruitfull; they may seeme to pray for two things of the Lord: the first was, that there might bee true loue and good liking betweene *Boaz* and *Ruth*: *for true loue and good liking ought to bee betweene husband and wife specially: so commanded, so practised by Isaac, and by Elkanah, and other godly men; and it is that which maketh marriage comfortable, and the parties to liue quietly together with mutuall contentment. Oh therefore let vs pray for this loue, and not onely pray, but endeavour to vse the best meanes to procure and hold it! And to effect this, the married persons are to take heed of strange affections, which might alienate their minds one from another; then to behold rather the good qualities and vertues of one another, than the infirmities, and things to bee found fault with: for loue couereth a multitude of offences. Young persons before marriage cannot see one anothers faults, and if they doe see them, yet their loue is such as they can passe them by. Why, is not loue in marriage as strong: nay, stronger, seeing now two are made one? Isaac tooke *Rebecca*, and shee was his wife, and he then loued her: but now men loue their *Rebeccaes* afore*

E c marri-

Malac. 2. 15.

Ephe. 5. 25.
Col. 3. 19.
Gen. 24. 67.
1. Sam. 1. 5.

Gen. 1. 28.
Zach. 8. 5.
Gen. 9. 1.

Luke 1. 25.
1. Sam. 1. 16.
Leuit. 20. 20.
Ier. 22. 30.
Gen. 20. 18.
2. Sam. 6. 23.
Psal. 127. and
128.

Gen. 29. 32, 35.

marriage, and then taking them for wiues, they hate them, or not loue them as before. Moreover, the married parties are to bee ready to performe mutuall dueties cheerefully: yea, they are to striue which should be most louing in their duties of loue, and should also prouoke one another thereto. Lastly, they should often thinke of the solemne couenant made betwixt them, and by that and other godly reasons presse themselues, the husband himselfe, and the wife her selfe, to their duties: yea, they should bewaile their owne, and one anothers corruptions before God, and pray against them, and for Gods good graces to make them duetifully louing one to another: thus doing shall they, by Gods blessing, both procure and keepe loue. The second thing they prayed for, was the encrease of children, which was the first blessing to man and woman, when God had made them; and the first and principall end of marriage, and which God promised vnto his people. In old time it was held a reproach for women to be barraine; and the Lord did threaten it as a punishment: yea, and inflicted it vpon some. Surely it is the want of a blessing, as the Psalmist teacheth. And therefore let vs pray for this blessing, as *Abraham* did, *Isaac*, *Moses*, and *Hannah*: from which these are farre, who so marry, as they might bee without hope of children; such also as murmure at Gods blessing, through vnbeliefe, fearing not to haue to maintaine them, vnlike *Leah*, who comforted her selfe and praised God for children. Some would haue some one or two,

two, as it were to play withall, or to inherite that they haue, but many they cannot away with: but these are most to be condemned, who vse meanes and medicines to preuent children, or sin in the sinne of *Onan*, whom the Lord slew: for it is murther before the Lord. Lastly, from the prayer made to the Lord for loue betweene them, and the encrease of children, wee may obserue two other things: First, that *loue betweene man and wife commeth of God, and is his gift*: for as the Psalmist saith, it is God that maketh them that are in one house, to be of one mind: and therefore we ought to pray to him for it, and where it is, to praise him heartily for the same. Then, that *Children are the gift of God*: as may appeare by many Scriptures, and by the prayers made to God for them. And therefore must we acknowledge them from God, as *Eue* did, and *Leah*; if wee want them, pray to him for them, as *Hannah* and others did, and then care to bring them vp well, and dedicate them to Gods seruice in some lawfull calling, in thankfulnessse for his so great a mercy.

Which two did build the house of Israel.] That is, God made them fruitfull to bring forth to *Iacob* a familie, of whom came the Israelites the peculiar people of God. They two are onely mentioned, their maids are left out, but vnderstood in them: for that they were the wiues gift vnto *Iacob* to beare children for them, when they bare not. They are said to build the house, when they brought forth children; which Metaphore is

Gen. 38. 9.

Psal. 107. 38. &
117. and 128.
Gen. 20. 18. &
29. 31. & 4. 1. &
29. 35.

י"ב
ה'כ"ב

Gen. 32.28. &
35.10.

Esa. 62.2.
Gen. 37.5, 15.

Gen. 32.26,
27, 28.

Gen. 32.28.
Gal. 6.

vsed, because in Hebrew the name of a sonne commeth from a word which signifieth to build: so as the bringing forth of children, is as the building vp of an house, by which a familie is named for the cohabitation of man and wife together: so wee call our kindred and stocke, our house. Note here howsoever men haue the name of the house, and by them commeth the posteritie to be honourable, yet are *women the builders vp of the house, and are the especiall instruments of the encrease of posterity*: for when men had no children, it is said, The women were barraine, and their wombs shut vp; and when men had any, it is said, The Lord gaue the women to conceiue. In them therefore is either the encrease or decay of posterity, yet both from God, as hee either pleaseth to blesse or to deny the blessing. By *Israel* is meant *Iacob*; touching which name of *Israel*, note these three things: the change of the name by God himselfe, to comfort *Iacob* in great feare for his brothers comming against him, and to shew his more excellent estate then before: for the change of a name, was to expresse a more happy condition, as may appeare in a new name promised to the Church, and giuen also to *Abraham*: and here before *Iacobs* name was called *Israel*, it is said, The Lord blessed him, and gaue him the name, so as with the change of the name, was the change of his estate foretold. The signification of this name, which is the next thing, is, preuailing with God: whence wee in Christ are called, *The Israel of God*: for that we preuaile with

with him through Christ. The third thing is the euent according to the name, for hee preuailed against *Eſau* by Gods mercy: for though hee came againſt him with foure hundred men, yet was his heart ſo mollified at the ſight of his brother, as hee with teares embraced him for ioy of their meeting; and afterwards when *Iacob* was in Canaan, *Eſau* gaue way vnto him, and went into Edom, and left him the Land. Thus God made good his Promise to *Iacob*, and made him *Israel*, a true Preuailer: for God giueth no ſignes to his children, but he maketh the ſame good in the effects, and the euent answerable thereunto. So much for the words: but in this that theſe Elders and people doe pray for a bleſſing of children, from the conſideration of Gods former mercies to others; and alſo doe take their example from ſuch as did build vp *Israel*, Gods Church; and not *Babel*; *Bethel*, and not *Bethauen*, we may learne; Firſt, that Gods bleſſings to others before vs, are a motiue to vs that come after, to beg the like bleſſings in the like caſe from God, reſeruing to himſelfe his good pleaſure and will, which, in asking the commou bleſſings of the world, is euer the condition either to bee expreſſed or vnderſtood: for Gods mercies ſhewed to others, are not onely for their preſent good which receiue them, but to ſhew how ready the Lord is to ſhew the like mercie to others, if they themſelues by their ſinnes hinder not the ſame. Therefore let vs conſider of Gods mercies to others, to bee thereby encouraged to aſke the like of God

Gen. 33. 4. &
36. 6.

Pfal. 144. 13.

Pfal. 127. 5.

Gen. 35. 19. &
48. 7.

for our selues in the like case, with submission to Gods good will and pleasure. Secondly, that *such children are to be desired, as may bee to build vp Israel*, that is, Gods Church: such these pray for heere. This is the most happy blessing of the wombe; thus shall the wife bee as the pleasant Vine, and the children like Olive branches, which a man may behold with comfort: for by them God is glorified in his mercy, the Church encreased, parents comforted, and children made happy, sonnes being as Plants growing vp, and the daughters as corner stones polished: these be the arrowes which make the man blessed that hath his quiver full of them. But alas, how few desire such children? Most desire them for their name, for to possesse their inheritance after them, but not for the enlargement of Gods Church: for if so, we would not marry for meere pleasure, as many doe; or for the world, as not a few doe: but in the Lord with such as feare God, and so for Religion sake, and haue a care to bring vp our children in the knowledge of God, and not in the corrupt manners of the world, and fashions of the times, as most doe vnto vanity; or but vnto meere ciuility, as many doe, which are well accounted of, yet neuer bent their thoughts to true pietie in the education of their children.

And doe thou worthily in Ephrata.] This Ephrata is said to bee Bethlehem; yet some distinguish them thus, as Ephratah to bee the countrey, and Bethlehem the City; the one signifying encrease,

crease, the other the house of bread; which being so, it noteth that *where the countrey is fruitfull, and Ephrata increasing, there the townes and cities are Bethlehem, store-houses, and houses of bread.* So was it in Egypt in the dayes of Ioseph: for the encrease of the field by Gods blessing in mans husbandry, maketh plentie of food in the places of our dwellings. Our meditation vpon this should make vs thankfull to God, who hath for a long time made our countrey and fields Ephrata, and our cities and townes Bethlehem. And let vs take heed of sinne, which will cause the Lord to turne our plenty into scarcity, and make a barren wilderness of our fruitfull Land, for the wickednesse of vs the Inhabitants which dwell in it: for wee doe greatly prouoke him to wrath, in abusing his blessings to pride, idlenesse, gluttony, drunkennesse, whoredome, and want of mercy to the poore, as did wicked Sodom in her fulnesse. But let vs take heed: for the Lord will not euer strue with vs thus in mercie; his iustice cannot euer suffer it.

The words, *doe thou worthily*, are read also thus, *get thee riches*; which may well stand, and may bee a fit request for Boaz and Ruth after they bee married and haue increase of Children, teaching this, that *marriage needeth maintenance*, as we all know; for it is chargeable, and that in these respects, in housekeeping, in bringing vp of Children, and in being liable to rates and seisments, according to the ability of the parties married. And therefore let such as intēd to marry, provide

Gen. 24.

Gen. 30.

honestly aforehand for the maintenance of marriage, as *Abraham* did for *Isaac* his sonne, and not rush, through vnbridled lust, as many young lads and lasses, poore and beggerly doe in these daies, to their owne hurt, and the putting of a burthen vpon their neighbours, when they cannot maintaine their charge. If any haue improuidently married, and now doe feele the smart thereof, let them lay their hands to labour, and be the more painefull to get, to vphold their family, as *Iacob* did; and if they be godly and faithfull in their labour and seruice, God will blesse them, as he did him, in their measure, and as he in his diuine wisdom shall thinke meet for them. If we take the words as they be in the translation, *doe thou worthily*, let vs note that a man may bee said to doe worthily in a double respect, either in respect of his person, when hee doth that which well befits him, according to his birth, his education, his age, his place, and his holy profession of a Christian, as men doe expect from such a one; or in respect of the deed done, when it is so done, as the vertues, which should concur to the doing thereof, doe liuely appeare, and shew themselves in it. To apply this to riches, in the getting, keeping, and imployment of them, a man doth worthily, first, in the getting, when these vertues appeare; *industry*, painefully labouring, as *Iacob* did, *equity*, in vsing onely lawfull meanes lawfully, auoiding all fraud, deceit, and vniust courses to get riches: then *pietie*, which is a holy depending vpon God for a blessing vpon the lawfull meanes, which

which he daily begges at his hands, not resting vpon his owne wit, or paines-taking; and lastly, *contentation*, not eagerly pursuing after riches, as most doe, who fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and noysome lusts, which drowne men in destruction and perdition. Secondly, in keeping, a man doth worthily, when therein is shewed *frugalitie*, a vertuous sparing, and not a niggardly keeping in, vnbesitting his ability, his place and person; so also *equitie* euen in this, when he will not withhold from another, that vvhich is not his owne to keepe; for iniustice may be as well in keeping, as in getting, and thirdly *pietie*, vvhich is, vvhhen he sets not his heart on riches, trusts not in them, nor is lifted vp aboue his brethren, but knowveth himselfe vnder God, in the midst of his vvealth, vvalking therefore religiously and humbly, this man so doing, doth vworthily. Thirdly, in imploying or laying out, hee doth worthily, when hee is liberall to good vses, for the good of Gods Church, as was *Dauid*, and his Princes; & *Salomon* for the Temple; the Israelites before for the Tabernacle; and *Hezechias* and the people for the Priests and Leuites: so for the Common-wealth, and place of his dwelling, and withall to lay out for his owne family, to maintaine himselfe, wife and children, as besitteth his place and after his ability; so to take care, and freely to giue to nourish his whole family with food sufficient, not neglecting the poore, but to be ready to lend to some, and to giue to other some, as their needfull estates shall require.

Heb. 13.5.

1. Tim. 6.9.

2. Chro. 31.4, 5,
6, 8.

require. Thus shall he by liberality and charity doe worthily in laying out.

And bee famous.] This well followeth after the other: They pray that he may doe worthily, and then become famous. *It is a duty to pray one for another, especially for men of authority, that they may doe worthily, and become renowned thereby:* for their greater authority, and because their example of well-doing and fame therein will be a great meanes to perswade others to wel-doing, or else a bridle to curb them for feare of offending: Let vs then pray for men in place to do worthily, and to become thereby renowned, to prouoke others to follow them, and that vertue may bee countenanced by them, as it will be by those, which be famous for vertue. Note againe, that *to doe worthily, procureth fame, and renowne, and good report:* so *David* became famous, and *Salomon* by his wisdom and acts, and likewise others obtained good report; and the fame of our Sauour was spread abroad by his Life, Doctrine, and miracles; and euen *Ruth* a poore woman and stranger, by her vertues was made knowne in *Bethlehem*. And this commeth to passe by the excellencie of well-doing in the minds of such as loue it themselves, who cannot but in heart approue, and in tongue extoll it, and set forth the due praises of such as doe worthily. The Lord also putteth this blessing vpon well-doing, that the Doers shall receiue honour and praise of men: so got *David* praises euen aboute *Saul*, and was honoured by the commendations of his fact, before the King.

Psal. 120.
1. King. 1. 37.

2. Sam. 8. 13.
1. King. 10. 1
2. Chron. 9. 5.
Heb. 11. 2.

Chap. 3. 11.

1. Sam. 18. 7.

King. Therefore when wee see men to doe worthily, let vs set out their praises : for their encouragement, and to pricke forward others to well-doing, and not bee like the enuious Scribes and Pharises seeking to diminish the honour of Christ; nor like *Saul*, who sought the life of *Dauid*; and the Ephraimites, the destruction of *Iephie*, for their worthy deeds: such a blacke poison is enuie, as it bedarkeneth the name of well-doers, as much as it can, rather than to make it famous.

Iud. 11. and 12.

In Betlehem.] Heere is the place where they desire to haue him famous, where he was brought vp, where hee had his meanes to liue, and place of authority; teaching heereby, that it is there chiefly required for a man to doe worthily, where he oweth that duty: as where he hath beene brought vp, where he hath his estate to liue by, and where God hath seated him. So did our Saviour worthily in Nazareth, *Iephie* among the Gileadites: for their good and the well-fare of all Hrael, if *Ephraim* had so taken it. This is a memorandum to Ministers, there to doe worthily, where God placeth them, and were they haue their liuing, and not bee like some that can doe worthily abroad sometimes, but at home will take little or no paines to teach their people. This also should put Gentlemen and men of place, in mind to doe worthily in the countrey in good house-keeping among their Tenants, from whence they haue their reuenues; and not get vp to Cities, there to keepe a private table, to encrease their estate,

Luke 4. 16, 17, 18.

or

or else to uphold their pride. Neither yet is it enough for men to dwell in the country, as diuers doe, but doe not worthily, their Neighbours being neuer a whit the better for them, but are either so niggardly, as they benefit none, living onely to themselues, or else so prodigall, as they rob their Tenants with borrowing, and diuers other wayes, both sorts ouercharging them.

Verse 12. And let thy house bee like the house of Pharez (whom Tamar bare vnto Iudah) of the seed, which the Lord shall giue thee, of this young woman.

THese words be the third part of their prayer. They did first pray for the woman, as the builder of the house, as before it is said of *Rachel* and *Leah*. Next, for the man, because hee is the glory of the house; now for the posterity, because they doe continue it. Heere note what is prayed for, for an honourable posterity, set out by the house of *Pharez*, whose father and mother are mentioned; then, of whom it must come, and by whose gift and goodnesse.

And let thy house.] That is, thy children and posterity: so as they praying before for the parents, and now for the children, doe teach this, that *they which truly wish well in loue to the parents, cannot but be well-minded to their children and posterity*: so did *Dauid* to *Mephibosheih* the sonne of *Jonathan*, to *Chimham* the sonne of *Barzillai*, and to *Hanun* the sonne of the King of *Ammon*: for
how

1. Ioh. 5. 1.

2. Sã. 19. & 10.

how can wee loue the fountaine, and not the streame? the roots, and not that which springeth from it? Let vs trie hereby true loue to parents, by the loue we beare to their children.

Be like the house of Pharez.] *Pharez* signifieth a breach, because in the wombe he stroue for the birth-right, and brake out before his brother *Zarah*, who had put out his hand to come first forth, to bee the first borne, but pluckt backe his hand againe. *Zarah* may set out the Iewes, who were the first of Gods people, but by apostasie lost their birth-right; *Pharez* may set out the Gentiles, who made a breach vpon them, and got the birth-right and the honour, to be called now the people of God. There bee two sorts of *Pharez*, one heavenly, which strive for to be of the first borne of God: this is a blessed struing which few contend for. There is another earthly, when brethren contend for to get the elder brothers inheritance from him, and doe labour to get him disinherited: the neglect of the former, is vnholinesse; and the pursuing of the latter, is too great worldlinesse. These words, *To be like the house of Pharez*, giue vs to know, that he was greatly blessed and honorable in his posteritie, seeing they desire that *Bars* house might bee like his. Now men wish not such a thing to great persons, but where there is an estate answerable to their greatnesse, and may well besit them, and be held a blessing vnto them: and yet this *Pharez* was base gotten, and that in incest also. Whence wee may see, that *basely begotten may become very honora-*

Jud. 11.

Heb. 11.

honorable, so as it may bee happy with others to be blessed like them for worldly respects. Thus also was Jephre honorable, a man of valor, made the head ouer all the inhabitants of Gilead, and yet the sonne of an Harlot. Thus it pleaseth God to shew mercy on whom hee will shew mercy: which may comfort such as be base borne, that if they bewaile their birth, and repent and belecue, the Lord will haue mercy likewise on them, and register them in the beadroll of the Saints, as Jephthah is. Againe, this may teach from these Elders and people, that they are to be esteemed honorable, whom God doth make honorable; for these speake highly of Pharez for all his birth; and the Gileadites thought worthily of Jephthah, and did him honor: yea, the holy Ghost hath vouchsafed to honor him, and to put him among the faithfull, though hee was by birth a bastard. They therefore doe amisse, who despise men for their birth, when otherwise they be worthily qualified, and better conditioned, then those perhaps which be more lawfully begotten. True it is, that a Bastard was not to come into the congregation for ten generations; but God can dispense with his Law, and where he so doth, let vs doe them honor, and not debase whom the Lord exalreth.

Whom Tamar bare vnto Iudah.} Iudah was one of Jacobs sonnes, and one of the twelue Patriarks, and begot this Pharez on this woman Tamar, who was his daughter in law: the history is in Gen. 38. Whence we may note briefly, That great were

were the falls of many of the holy Patriarchs as nine of them in the conspiracy against innocent Joseph, whose death they intended, because he told his father their ill report; for that also Jacob loved him more then all of them; and because he told them his dream, for which they the more envied him, and were the more bent against him. But more particularly Ruben fell into that foule sinne, to lie with his Fathers Concubine: Simeon and Leui, brethren in euill; who vnder colour of religion sought to reuenge the blood of the Church, and abused the seal of Gods bouchar to shed Church blood; and Judah here committeth incest with Tamar. Thus may we see, that many of the fathers of Gods Church, and pillars of the Church, may fall by fearfully, as may also appeare besides these in Aaron, in Samson, Abimelech, David, Salomon, and many others. Such is the strength of temptation, when we are left of God; and therefore to are we to feare and to looke to our standing, watch and pray continually, lest we fall into temptation and be overcome. And also we may obserue how Iesus Christ was tempted to come of such as were tainted with foule vices, as of men flayed and polluted, with incest, as Judah, with adultery, and murder, as David, with idolatry, as Achan, with witchcraft and forcery, as the women desired, as of this Tamar, of Rahab the harlot, and of Bathsheba, which sinned in adultery with David: to shew hereby, that he our blessed Saviour came into the world to save sinners, which is for the comfort of the penitent. And here also such

Ge. 37. 2, 3, 11.

8. 7. 2. 2.

1. Tim. 1. 15.

such as be godly, may learne not to be discouraged, not to be daunted, neither to account worse of themselves, because they haue had of their kindred souly tainted with vices. We see here the innocent Lambe of God to haue been of such, and yet he the Holy one of Israel. Let such then put themselves to silence, who seeke to disgrace the well-deseruing, by the staine of Ancestors or some of their kindred. By thus doing, men should offer wrong to Iesus Christ, which euery Saint of God is very farre from: and who is hee that should not bee disgraced, if this might serue to disgrace a man? Note farther, how these words come in by a parenthesis: whether vttered by the Elders and people, or else put in by the Pen-man of the holy Ghost, it is not materiall: but heere we see, how God would haue a remembrance of the birth of *Pharez*, with his honour and outward blessings from God: for *that it is good in our great glory and outward prosperity, to be put in mind whence wee be.* Thus God put *David* in remembrance and *Ieroboam*: for so such persons shall haue cause to praise God for his mercies, and bee kept humble, and not forget themselves, as men commonly doe in their peace and prosperity. Let such then as bee raised vp from a low estate, remember whence they are, and bee willing to heare thereof from others: for Gods mercie shall be the more knowne, admired, and glorified, whose praise wee must seeke with the very vnto contempt of our selues, if so the case shall require. How great a signe of pride is it then, and

of

2. Sam. 7. 8.

of a will to obscure Gods mercies, when men will chase in themselves against such as shall mention their meane or base birth? But if men may not forget whence they be in their worldly advancement, then may wee not forget our naturall birth in our spirituall exaltation, when wee bee made the children of God, Kings and Priests to him, of children of wrath, and bond-slaves to Satan. If the remembrance of the other put vs in minde of Gods mercy, much more this: for betweene them is no comparison. Lastly note, that it is said, that *Tamar bare Pharez unto Iudah. Mothers bring forth children to the fathers of the children:* so is it said that *Leah bare sonnes to Iacob:* for the father is to beare the name, and take the child into his care and tuition, whether borne in wedlocke or otherwise. Let fathers therefore take care of such as they beget: for to them hath the mothers brought them out.

Gen. 39. 34.

Of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.] Hence may bee obserued, that an old man may marry a young woman: as heere Boaz did Ruth, and Ioseph did the Virgin Mary: but not for wantonnesse, but for issue and posterity, as Boaz doth: allow therefore of such marriages in such a case: but beware of an old man lecherous, who is one that God hateth; so an old woman wantonly affected, to marry with a young man. Secondly, that *Children are Gods gift:* of which at large before. Which must mooue vs to thank God for them, and to traine them vp to his seruice, and to acknowledge them his gracious

Gen. 48. 9.

Gen. 33. 5.

Rom. 10. 14.

Deut. 25.

Iam. 1. 6.

Mat. 21. 22.

Iam. 5. 15, 16,
17.

2. Sam. 7. 25.

Gen. 17. 20.

Out of verse 5.

gift, as *Jacob* did. Thirdly, that *true prayer is not without faith*: for it proceedeth from it, as the *Apostle* teacheth; and heere the words plainly imply, that these *Elders* and people were perswaded, that *God* would giue to *Boaz* children of *Ruth*: for they said, *Which the Lord shall giue thee*; As taking it for granted, that he would giue him children, which they were perswaded vnto from the young yeeres of *Ruth*, then from the obedience of *Boaz*, who married *Ruth* onely to raise vp children to the dead, that his name might not perish, according to the Law of *God*, which hee herein chiefly respected: and thirdly, because this was the *Line* and *Stocke*, out of which the *Messias* should come, according to *Jacobs* prophesie; and therefore they knew that of these should come issue to fulfill the prophesie. In praying, let vs also with these beleue, so are wee commanded; and if we doe beleue, we shall obtaine what wee aske, if the *Lord* thinke it needfull for vs: for the prayer of faith auaieth much, if it be seruent. Fourthly and lastly, hence obserue, that *Prayer is a meanes to make an honourable house, and to continue it in the following posterity*. Therefore *Dauid* vsed prayer in this case, as these doe here for *Boaz* house in his posterity; and so did *Abraham* pray for *Ishmael* to continue in the *Lords* sight, who promised him mercy, and an honourable issue to many generations from him. Let vs vse this meanes to vphold and continue our house: I haue spoken of many good meanes before, let this bee added to them. But men in their

their worldly wisdom seek by other means without prayer, to continue their posterity in honour, as by these: First, by great purchases for their children. But doth not *Salomon* tell them, that riches are not for ever? And we find it true by experience. Secondly, by building stately houses, and calling them by their own names, thinking that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations. But doth not the Psalmist tell them that this their way is their folly? Is not the Tower of Babel throwne downe? And, became not that their confusion, by which they sought a name and to continue together? Thirdly, by intailing of lands vpon the heires male, from one to another for many generations. But could there be a surer intaille than the Kingdome of Israel to *Dauid*, which yet was almost quite cut off by *Salomons* idolatry, so as *Rehoboam* lost ten Tribes in his dayes? Intaille it as sure as they can, yet the iniquity of the children will make it to bee cut off. God liketh not, that men should by their deuices tye his blessings to whom they list, for vaine-glory sake, and to keepe vp a name. And doe not we see Lawyers, which teach parents to intaille, how they can teach their children to vntaille it againe? Fourthly, by matching with great houses, and by this they thinke their house shall stand. But did not *Ahab* by marrying with *Iezabel*, the King of *Zidons* daughter, root out his whole posterity? And did not *Iehosaphat* by marrying his sonne to *Ahabs* daughter, doe almost the like? Fifthly and

Prou. 27. 24.

Psal. 49. 13.

Gen. 11. 4, 8.

Prou. 27. 24.

Esa. 22. 16, 17,
21.

lastly, by procuring great places of honour in the Common-wealth: oh then they think they are surely founded! But doth not *Salomon* tell them, that the Crowne endureth not to euery generation? but let these consider of *Haman*, and of his high place, and yet how suddainly hee came to a fearefull end; and with this let them not forget the Treasurer *Shebnah*, who graued, as it were, his habitation in a Rocke by policie, and by making strong sides for himselfe. But doth not *Esay* say, That the Lord would lead him into captiuitie, and violently turne him, and tosse him as a Ball, and driue him from his station, and bestow his place vpon another? And therefore without the Lord all these meanes are weake to vphold a house; yea, such a house, sinne will vnder-myne and cause to fall. Let none therefore rest on these weake props, but pray vnto the Lord for his blessing, which maketh strong the habitation of the righteous.

Verse 13. *So Boaz took Ruth, and shee was his wife: And when hee went in vnto her, the Lord gaue her conception, and shee bare a sonne.*

Here is the full accomplishment of the marriage, the holy liberty thereof, and the blessing of God vpon the same: both for conception, and bringing forth a sonne.

So Boaz took Ruth.] Where hee tooke her, it is not mentioned; whether after this Assembly was dismissed or before, is not certaine: some thinke

thinke shee stayed with *Naomi*, expecting the successe, as *Naomi* aduised in Chap. 3. verse 18. and so from thence did take her. It may bee shee was, while this Assembly was together (after *Boaz* had publikely declared his mind, and bought the land and her at the hands of the Kinsman) brought in thither, and so he there did solemnly take her: for in the end of the former verse it is said, *Of the seed which the Lord shall giue thee of this young woman,*] as implying her then there present. And *He tooke her,*] implyeth the marriage, as appeareth elsewhere in other places. And the next words in the Text shew, that it was not like *Sichems* taking of *Dinah*, to deflowre her, but to make her his wife by lawfull wedlocke, which was euer publike, and not done priuately in corners. So then the meaning of the words is, that *Boaz* did marry *Ruth*, and so was his wife; and with vs such as doe marry, doe take either other by the hand, and doe by word of mouth say, that the one doth take the other to liue together as man and wife. And it may be, that the word *taking* is put for *marrying*, to note the free consent of mind and heart; then the right and interest which the one hath in the other: and thirdly, the care and protection of the husband, which he taketh of his wife, and the womans acknowledgement to haue betaken herselfe vnto the man, as her head and husband. This *Boaz* taking and marrying of *Ruth*, sheweth, how a noble man (for his father was the Prince of Iudah) may marry with a meane poore woman, so shee be vertuous: as his

Gen. 24. 67.
1. Sam. 25. 43.
Iudg. 14. 8.
Gen. 34. 2.

1. Chron. 2. 10.

Verse 10.

Chap. 3. 11, 13.

Gen. 24. 67.

Iudg. 14. 8, 15.

Ephe. 5. 19.

Gen. 29. 23.

Iudg. 14. 10.

father did *Rahab* before, and *Ashuerus* did *Ester*, and no disparagement: though *Boaz* had further reason to lead him thereto, as his owne words before declare. Againe, we see, how an Israelite might marry with a woman a stranger, so shee were a *Conuert*. And lastly, that a good man will keepe his honest word: for what he had priuately promised, he heere now maketh good to the vtmost: of which two last points I haue spoken before.

And shee was his wife.] That is, by his taking and marrying of her. So we see, that *lawfull marriage is that which maketh man and woman husband and wife*. So is it said of *Rebecca*, *That Isaac tooke her, and shee was his wife*; and in like case of the woman of *Timnah*, which *Samson* did marry. It is not living or lying together, as lewd persons may doe, nor yet mutuall affection, but the entering in Gods holy Ordinance, which maketh the woman the wife. Therefore to liue honestly, and to make a woman thy wife, marry her lawfully. Now in this that the marriage is so shortly described, without mentioning of any such feasting and merriments, as is often with vs, with too much ryot and excesse; it may here bee demanded, *Whether it bee lawfull to make feasts at marriages, and then to bee merry?* *Answ.* It is lawfull to be merry in sobriety, to reioyce and sing, so it be with grace in our hearts, as the Apostle speaketh. And we may make feasts, as *Laban* did at *Iacobs* marriage, and as *Samson* did at his, as the custome was among the Philistims, which he

he obserued: yea, our Saviour was at a feast when some were married, and did by diuine power supply their want of wine; and by the Parable it seemeth to be an vsuall thing to feast, and to haue solemnities obserued besides at marriages. Here onely beware of wantonnesse, ryot, and excesse, and then may they eate, and drinke, and reioyce their hearts.

And when hee went in vnto her.] This is expounded in another place, to goe to her into the chamber: for Brides had a priuate chamber, into which the bridegrome entred on the marriage day: but here is modestly implied the act of marriage, set out also in Scripture by other tearmes, as of knowing, lying with one, giuing due beneuolence; neuer speaking hereof, but by a periphrasis and circumlocution: and therefore are wee hereby taught, that *when necessity enforceeth to speake of that, which in proper speech is not comely to utter, it is to be expressed so, as chaste eares may not be offended.* This the holy Ghost in thus setting downe this thing in these modest tearmes teacheth; And it serueth to reprove such as abuse their tongues to wantonnesse, and lasciuious and immodest tearmes, to make others merry, and to be held pleasant companions: but such fooles, as *Salomon* calleth them, make a sport of sin: for these offend against the Commandement and charge giuen by the Apostle: they corrupt good manners, by their ill words; they trespasse against the seuenth Commandemēt, and do contrary to that which the Apostle teacheth and exhorteth

Ff 4

vnto

Iohn 2.
Mat. 22. 2. and
25.

Iud. 15. 1.
Ioel 2. 16.

Ephe. 4. 29.
Col. 3. 8.
Ephe. 5. 3.
1. Cor. 13. 33.

Col. 4. 8.
Ephē. 4. 29. &
5. 19.

Ephē. 4. 30.

*Athenian law:
apud Stobaeum.*

Au. Gell.

Gen. 39. 21.

I. Cor. 7. 3, 5.

vnto for the gouernment of the tongue both in speaking and singing; yea, these doe grieue, not as they think, onely men, such as they iudge over-precise, because they will not runne with them into the like excesse of ryot, but the blessed Spirit of God. And let these know, that if men must giue an account vnto God for every idle word, then surely for such filthy communication and bawdy songs, which fleshly spirits made themselves merry withall, which godly men haue condemned, calling such a speech, The chariot of adultery, because it bringeth many to such a lewd practice. Heathen by lawes haue forbidden it, for that it pollureth the mind, filleth it with wickednesse, and maketh such impudent; and also did punish the same, as is reported of the Romanes, that so the dignity of the Lawes and Discipline among them might remaine, as one saith, inuiolable. What a shame and impudencie is it then in such as would bee called Christians, and yet cannot by Reason nor Religion of Christ, be restrained from such petulancie and wantonnesse? Note againe here, how this is spoken after marriage, and not before; to teach, that *such as be married, may lawfully company together*: and that by warrant from God, who said after hee had made man, and ioyned Adam and Eue in marriage, *Increase and multiply*: and the Apostle teacheth, that then neither of them hath power over their owne body, and hereof maketh a double vse, to render due beneuolence, and not to defraud one another. Then they are to be repro-
ued,

ued, which before marriage company one with another, as incontinent and violently lustfull persons doe, and such as being married doe defraud one another. And heere this condemneth the Church of Rome, which alloweth man and wife, vpon the vowe of chastitie (forsooth) to liue asunder one from another, contrary to the Apostles Doctrine and exhortation.

The Lord gaue her conception.] Hence it is evident, that *the gift of conception is from the Lord*: and this is true not onely in such as be altogether barren, as was *Sarah, Rebecca, Hannah*, the *Shunamite*, and *Elizabeth*: but in such as bee at the first fruitfull; this also is from his gift. And therefore is it to be ascribed to him, he is to be thanked for it; wee are not to thinke, as *Rachel* did, that a husband can giue children: it is no strength of body, nor good complexion that can make fruitfull, but the blessing of God. And wee may further learne here, that *the Lord alloweth of the honest act of marriage*: for hee commandeth due beneuolence: he calleth the marriage bed vndesyled, hee blesteth it, and giueth the gift of conception: hee allowed thereof before the fall, and hath in mercy ordained it as a remedy against sinne. This therefore confuteth such as haue iudged the companying together of man and wife to bee a sinnefull act, absurdly and prophanely abusing this place for it, *Those that liue in the flesh, cannot please God*: as if that which God himselfe hath allowed, and most holy men of God haue done, should bee now that, which should

1. Cor. 7. 5.

Iob 10. 8, 10, 11.

1. Cor 7.
Heb. 13. 4.Gen. 1.
1. Cor. 7. 2.

Heb. 13.

Gen. 38. 18. &
16. 4.
2. Sam. 11. 5.

Gen. 33. 5.

Gen. 18. 10.

should debarre them of Gods fauour: when yet these popish harlottries can dispence with Gods Law, and keepe their whores; and yet not liue in the flesh, but bee holy men. But let them know, that whoremongers and adulterers God will iudge: when marriage is honourable, and the bed vndefiled, and the libertie to be vsed and allowed for procreation of children, to auoid fornication, with heartie thanks vnto God for his ordinance. Heere note farther the difference which the Scripture maketh betweene conception of a woman a wife, and of another. In copulation out of marriage, it is said of a woman, that *shee conceiued*, as *Thamar by Iudah*, *Hagar by Abraham*, and *Bathsheba by David*: but neuer as heere, that *the Lord gaue her to conceiue*: for the other is by his common blessing, as among bruit beasts, but this by his fauourable approbation and gracious blessing, as *Iacob* said of his children vnto *Esau*.

And she bare a sonne.] After the gift of conception, followeth child-birth, not forthwith, but in due time of life, which is sometime at the nyenth moneth, but commonly at the tenth. It was not enough that she should conceiue, and after haue an abortiue birth, but that God in mercy should preferue the child alieue in the mothers wombe to be timely borne: for as not to conceiue, but to be barren, was a punishment, so conceiuing, and to bring forth an vntimely birth, is in the same nature. The Lord therefore here sheweth his goodnesse, not onely in giuing conception, but a happy

happy deliuerance vnto *Ruth*, and a timely birth; so the Lord followeth his with his mercies. Now in that it is said to be a sonne, and not a daughter, it is to note the greater blessing. For it is a greater blessing to haue a sonne, then a daughter. And therefore wee doe finde, when God would make the barren to beare, and such as had begged that blessing at his hands, he gaue them sonnes, as we may see in *Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Hannah, Elizabeth* and in others. Because the sonne is the vp-holder of the name of the family, he is in nature the more worthy; for the woman was made for man, and not man for the woman, as the Apostle teacheth; and the man is a more fitter instrument for the good of the Church or Commonweale; albeit sometime the Lord hath done wonderfully by women. Besides these reasons, the males among the Israelites were a greater blessing; for that the man-child, and the continuance of the line in *Judah*, gaue them hope of the Messias, which they looked for; and the male child bare vpon him the seale of the couenant of God, which was circumcision, that God would bee their God, and of their seed after them. Therefore praise God for this blessing and birth, for both, but more specially for this, as beholding therein the Lords mercy to keepe thy name vpon the earth, among thy brethren, and Saints of God. Lastly, note the effectuall power of the prayer which they made, vers. 11. The Lord heard them; for here wee see *Ruth* before barren, is now become fruitfull. So as we hereby doe learne, That
the

Iam. 5. 16, 17.

2. Chro. 14. 17,
12, and 20. 6---
14, 15--- and
32. 20.

1. Sam. 12.
Rom. 15. 30.
2. Cor. 1. 11.
Ephes. 6. 18.
Col. 4. 3.
1. Thes. 5. 25.
Philem. 22.
Phil. 1. 19.
Heb. 13. 18, 19.

the hearty and faithfull prayer of the godly is neuer in vaine: for the people and Elders desired that *Ruth* should be fruitfull, and she was so, and also that *Boaz* posterity might be honorable and renowned, & so it was, as we may see in the 21. and 22. verses of this chapter. For an effectuell praier of righteous men auaieth much, as *Iames* saith, and prooueth by an instance of the prayer of *Eliab*, and as may be seene in the prayer of *Moses*, of *Asa*, *Iehosaphat*, *Esai*, and *Hezekiah*, and of many moe: which is to encourage vs. to the exercise of prayer in faith and seruency of spirit. If any thinke, that those afore-named were extraordinary men, and that therefore wee poore and miserable persons, in comparison of them, cannot looke to haue our prayers so effectuell with God; I answer, first, that *Iames* takes away this obiection and feare of acceptance with God; for hee saith, that *Eliab* was a man subiect to the like passions as wee are, yet hee prayed and was heard. Secondly, that we haue assistance of God his Spirit, teaching vs to pray with groanes which cannot bee expressed; because wee know not how to pray as wee ought: and thirdly, that Christ prayeth for vs, and in him we offer vp our supplications, and so shall be heard. This lesson also teacheth vs to esteeme greatly of the prayers of the godly, seeing they be so effectuell, and desire them to pray for vs, as the Israelites did *Samuel*, and *S. Paul* the faithfull and Saints of God, as may appeare in almost euery of his Epistles; so highly did he account of their prayers for him.

Verse

Verse 14. *And the women said vnto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may bee famous in Israel.*

PRaise and thanksgiuing vnto God at the birth of the child. The parties reioycing were the women, their ioy was vttered to *Naomi*, the manner was holy and religious praising God; the matter thereof, or the moeuing cause was, that God had not left her without a kinsman, and the hopefull end thereof, that his name may be famous in Israel.

And the women said.] That is, such godly women as were at the child birth, these reioyced in *Naomis* behalfe. For *itis the duty of one to reioyce in the welfare of another, when God bestoweth his blessings vpon them.* As these doe here, the neighbours of *Elizabeth*, *Iethro* at the prosperity of Israel, and the friends of *Iob* at his recovery: This we are commanded to doe, to reioyce with those that doe reioyce: the godly are members one of another, and therefore must needs haue a fellow feeling: it is a fruit of loue and charity, and that wee loue our neighbours as our selues, which if we doe, we will reioyce in their welfare, as we doe in our owne. But let this be with them in lawfull things; for charity reioyceth not in iniquity: let vs reioyce with them in their happy and blessed welfare, whether temporall as former examples shew, or spirituall, as *Saint Paul* reioyced in the behalfe

Luk. 1. 58.
Exod. 18. 9.
Iob. 42. 11.

Rom. 12. 15.
1. Cor. 12. 26.
Matth. 22. 39.

1. Cor. 13.

Phil. 1. 3, 4.
Col. 1. 3, 12.
2. Ioh. Verse 4.

Nehc. 2. 10.
Exod. 1.

1. Cor. 13. 4.

1. Cor. 13. 6.

behalf of the Philippians and Colossians, and Saint *Iohn* in the graces of the elect Lady and her children. This reprooveth three sorts, first, such as enuy the prosperity of others, as *Sanbalats* and *Tobies*, like Egyptians, which cannot endure to see others prosper by them. These are voyd of charity which is without enuy: and they are like the diuell, that being cast from Heauen, could not endure to see man in Paradise; or like diuelish men, *Cain*, *Saul*, and the Scribes and Pharises, the enemies of Christ. Secondly, such as reioyce with their friends in their prosperity, though they get vp by vniust meanes, and by vnlawfull practices vphold themselues: this is not true loue; for here is more cause of mourning then of reioycing; for what ioy can it bee to a godly heart, to see his friend rich and in glory, by vsury, bribery, oppression, deceit and fraud, which came for plagues vpon him from Heauen, and are the high way to hell and damnation? But outward prosperity so dazeleth the eyes, and deludeth the heart, as the plagues of the soule, and vengeance due for the same, they either see not, or belecue not; therefore they reioyce like worldlings with such as themselues. The third sort are they, which cannot reioyce with others in their spirituall welfare; that men are become godly, as Saint *Paul* and *Iohn* did, but rather despise them for it, because they themselues fauour not of the things of God, they loue darkenesse rather then the light. If they doe reioyce herein, it is rather for the good, which conuersion brings

in worldly respects, then of religion it selfe, as that hereby they leaue to be vnchristie, and doe care to liue in the world, and such like, vvhich is no reioycing at their heavenly graces, but for worldly profit, and for such things as Religion maketh good in regard of the outvvard things of this life; as profit, good report in a common acception, ciuill carriage, and so forth. This is a worldly, and not a spirituall reioycing with those that truly reioyce in the Spirit.

Vnto Naomi.] And why to her more then to Ruth? Because she was the principall instrument for the effecting of the marriage, and shee stood in most need of comfort, hauing endured a long time affliction. *For those chiefly are to be cheared with the consideration of Gods mercies and blessings; who haue been most humbled:* As these doe bere *Naomi*; for they speake so to her, as if this blessing had been onely for her comfort, saying, He hath not left *her* without a kinsman, hee shall be to *thee* a restorer of life, and so forth. And therefore when wee see any to haue been much cast downe, and that the Lord beginneth to shew them mercy; let vs speake thereof chearefully vnto them, and comfort their hearts; for they know how to vse well Gods mercies, their former humiliation hath prepared them, hath schooled them, so as they will not waxe proud with the Lords blessings, as others doe. *Blessed bee the Lord.* Words of praise and thanksgiuing to the Author of this blessing. Thus begin they their ioy and mirth: for *the ioy*
of

Ephes. 3. 19.

Exod. 15.

Iud. 5.

2. Chron. 20.

Luk. 1.

Psalms. 103.

of the godly is holy and religious: for the matter of their ioy is good and lawfull, the manner with grace in the heart, as the Apostle exhorteth, and the end, to set forth the Lords glory, of whom with praises they make mention. This was the ioy of *Moses* and the Israelites, of *Deborah* and *Barak*, of *Iehosaphat* and *Indab*, of *Zacharie* and *Elizabeth*: for the godly take occasion from all the good which befalleth them, to be mindfull of the Lord, from whom they know they receive all blessings whatsoeuer they be, and whosoever be the instruments thereof to them: with *David* therefore they say, O my soule, praise thou the Lord, and forget not all his benefits! If this bee the ioy of the godly, what wickednesse then is it in those, who in their mirth, and in the midst of Gods blessings doe put away the remembrance of God, and the thought of his precepts: spirituall songs, and gracious speeches marre vterly their mirth; the presence of the godly is hatefull to them, and hindereth their merriments; for they cannot reioyce, but in vanitie; their talke is ribauldry, their songs wantonnesse, their laughter madnesse, and the delight of their hearts meere sensuality; the mirth of these must turne into mourning before they dye, else shall their musick be else where weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth: And here, before I end this, women may learne how to behaue themselves at the birth of Children, as first in prayer, then in praises; pray they should for pardon of sinne, and bewaile, in the womans pangs, original corruption,

ruption, in the birth, our spirituall pollution; and praise God they ought for safe deliuerance, acknowledging it his mercy and goodnesse, as these doe here. Many things might mouue them hereto, and to be far from the behaviour of some, who in stead of praising God, sit downe to bee merry, and to spend their speeches idly, prating of others, yea, sometimes in lewd slandering of their Neighbours, or in filthy scurrility, wherein the Midwife, which should bee a mother of modesty, is often chiefe; when such should be chaste, graue and godly matrons, who by their office and godly counsell might doe much good, if they were as they ought to bee; but so lowde are some of them, as they cannot endure the company of better disposed persons: Their praises should bee like the Midwiues in Egypt, women fearing God, able to instruct; to comfort; to pray vnto God, and to praise him for his goodnesse.

Exod. i.

Which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman.] This is it they blesse God for; that God had giuen to *Naomi* a young kinsman; a kinsman indeed, which will so shew himselfe. *Naomi* had a kinsman very nigh vnto her before, Chap. 3. 12. but hee shewed himselfe not like a kinsman, and therefore was here passed ouer as no kinsman. For as men in deede shew themselves, such they bee, and so are to bee esteemed, otherwise they haue but a name of a Brother, Father, Kinsman, Friend, Christian, yea, Minister, Magistrate, and haue not the trueth and substance of such. They

be but meerely titular, and glory in shadowes, as most doe, who are nothing answerable to that title and name of nature, of loue, of fellowship, or of office and place, which they are called by, or settled in. Note further, *that it is of God, that the godly poore are not left comfortles of some friend, one or other, both able and willing to helpe them.* Thus the women here tell Naomi, and doe blesse God therefore in her behalfe; for if God should not raise them vp succour, who would respect them? Because pouerty causeth contempt, or neglect at the least, and the religion of the poore is but held counterfeite, and themselues hypocrites: so the world iudgeth of them. And therefore when God raiseth vp friends to take knowledge of them, and to doe them good, great cause haue they to blesse God, as they here doe, both for hope of supply of wants, and also preventing of iniuries, which honest poore by such able and good friends are lesse subiect vnto, then others which want them.

That his name may be famous in Israel.] This is the hope they haue of this young Obed; and one mercy of God, in giuing this Sonne vnto this honorable family, is, that he might be renowned among Gods people. Whence note these two lessons: first, *That much is expected and looked for from the children of great & godly Parents*, both in respect of the Parents, & also of the Childrē. For is it supposed, that Parēts being godly, will haue care to instruct, and if need be, to correct their Children, to pray for them, and bee good examples

amples to them, and being great, that they will vse the best meanes, and procure the best helps for their good education, and leaue them sufficient to shew forth the fruits of godlinesse. And if thus Parents doe, who may imagine otherwise, till the contrary appeare, but that the Children of such will demeane themselves as they should? And who can expect but good from Children of godly Parents? Should not the Fathers graces prouoke Children to goodnesse? and their greatnesse, to abhorre base practices? Good Children will not degenerate from good Parents, whose goodnesse will more perswade to well-doing, then greatnesse to make them proud and wicked, as some *Abshaloms* and *Esaus* haue beene, and yet are, to the grieve of religious Parents, and at length to the shame and confusion of themselves. Secondly, here may be obserued, that *God giueth Children to the better sort, great and honorable, that they may become famous amongst Gods people.* So conceiued these godly women of this Sonne of *Boaz*; for, indeed, all the blessings of riches and honor giuen vnto Parents, are not only giuen for their owne good, but amongst other ends, for the better inabling of them to bring vp their family in good order, and especially their Children in the waies of God, for his seruice and honour, as they haue more meanes to prouoke them thereto. Let therefore such Parents here take such a course with their Children, as they may make them, by Gods blessing, famous in *Israel*, in Gods Church, and among his people;

Pfal. 101.
Luk. 1.

Ephc. 4. 4.
Prou. 4.

which they may effect by these good meanes. First, by being euery way, and at all times a good example of piety to them, as *Dauid* was, and *Zacharie*. Secondly, by instructing them carefully in godlinesse and Religion, as Parents are commanded, and as *Dauid* did instruct *Salomon*. Thirdly, by seeing them set to the practice of that which they are taught, and to haue an especiall eye thereto. Men teach their Children good manners among men, for ciuill carriage of their outward man, and will see therein if they offend, and reprocue them; so should they thus see to them in their Christian good manners and behauour towards God and good men, and in euery Christian duty towards all. Fourthly, by settling them in some particular calling, as *Adam* the Monarch of the world did his sonnes; to keepe them from idlenesse, from being busiebodies, and from a world of wickednesse, which such as liue but of a calling runne into. Fifthly, by restraining them from ill company, idle, wanton, prodigall and prophane persons, and exhorting them to haue fellowship with such as feare God, also with ciuill and honest men well reported of, well brought vp, and well disposed vnto goodnesse. Sixthly, by commending, countenancing, and encouraging their well doing, both by present rewards and promises of future good: but if they doe ill, then fatherly to admonish at the first, to with-hold them from euill by loue, rather then by slauish feare; but if this will not preuaile, then to rebuke sharply, and to punish

as the cause shall require. Thus if Parents would doe, there is no doubt, but by Gods mercy, many mens children of place, may become famous in Israel, and not be so infamous, as some be to Parents shame, and their owne ouerthrow.

Verse 15. *And he shall be vnto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loueth thee, which is better to thee then seven sonnes, hath borne him.*

THis is still the continued speech of the women to *Naomi*; the scope whereof is still to comfort her, in foreshewing what this Babe should be vnto her, and the reason why they so speake of him.

And he shall be vnto thee a restorer of thy life.] *Naomi* had many crosses, she had lost her Husband and Children, yea, and her outward state in the world, which made her, as it were, dead with sorrow, which these Women and godly Neighbours well considered of, and here therefore doe enlarge their speech for *Naomies* greater comfort; to teach vs, *That true friends, affected with others miseries, cannot but meditate many arguments of comfort in the daies of their felicity.* For the ioy of their hearts is vnfained for their friends prosperity, as truely as before they were moued with their calamitie. Thus let vs learne to trie the sympathy of mens hearts towards other in prosperitie and aduersitie.

A restorer of thy life.] So they speake, as if by
Gg 3 her

her former misery she had; as it were, been line-
 lesse. Whence note, *That heavy crosses, as penurie,
 old age, Widdowhood, and losse of Children, doe be-
 dead the spirit, euen of godly persons.* So these
 words imply, and experience teacheth. For no
 affliction is ioyous for the present, but grievous,
 Heb. 12. 12. How much more when many come
 together? Therefore let vs haue compassion of
 the afflicted, and labour to raise vp their spirits,
 especially of poore afflicted Widdowes; for it is
 a part of pure and vndefiled religion before God,
 Iam. 1. 27. This condemneth such of cruelty, as
 will vex the afflicted; or bee miserable comfort-
 ers, as *Iob's* friends were to him. Secondly, wee
 may learne, *That godly Children are as restorers of
 life to their Parents,* Prou. 10. 1. they make them
 glad. Let Children labour to be such, that they
 may cheere vp their Parents hearts; and not bee
 as too many be, causers of hearts grieffe to them,
 making them to goe downe with mourning to
 the graue; for such are foolish Children, Prou. 15.
 20. and 10. 1. and 17. 25.

And a nourisher of thine old age.] Note, first,
 that old age needs nourishing: for it maketh man
 feeble, and to want heate, 1. King. 1. 1. Eccles. 12. 3.
 Also to be subiect to diseases, as to bee blind, as
 was *Isaac*, Gen. 27. and *Iacob*, Gen. 48. 10. & to be
 lame, as *Asa*, 1. King. 15. Therefore in the youth
 of Summer, provide somewhat for the Winter
 of old age: and when thou hast prouision for age,
 thanke God therefore. Secondly, *that children
 are to be nourishers of their parents in their old age:* as
Joseph

See before
Chap. 2. 18.

Ioseph was to *Iacob*, Gen. 45. 11. and *Ruth* but a daughter in law here, to *Naomi*, Chap. 3. 18. and such a one the women hoped *Obid* would be. Let children learne this duty: for first, nature teacheth it, in the *Storke*, and branches of trees receiving the sap from the roote, doe returne it againe to it towards Winter. Secondly, Reason teacheth to bee thankfull, and to doe good to them that haue done vs good. From parents children haue being, bringing vp, and their preservation; whose love, care, paines and cost, children can neuer recompence. Thirdly, it is one end why they bee borne: for if a friend bee borne to helpe his friend in aduersitie, Prou. 17. 17. then much more children to helpe their parents, who are bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh. Fourthly, parents are childrens glory, Prou. 17. 6. Therefore should they make much of them. Fifthly, hereto adde the Commandement, Exod. 20. to honour our parents. Now, how are they honoured, when in want they are not relieved? Sixtly, such as succour their parents, may expect a blessing from their children. Those children therefore which are without naturall affection, sinne against God, against Nature, Reason and Religion. But children will, perhaps, say, Our parents are froward and hard to please, and therefore they make vs wearie and vnwilling to keepe and nourish them. *Ans.* First, consider how froward you were in childhood, and yet poore parents carefully kept you; and cast you not off. Secondly, when old age cometh, you may bee

such. Do then, as you would be done vnto: learne to beare with your parents, to teach your children how to beare with you. Thirdly, note how children can beare with rich parents well enough, while they hope for profit, and feare to lose what they looke for. If hope of gaine can make children put on such patience, then let true loue doe it much more.

For thy daughter in law, which loueth thee, which is better then seuen sonnes, hath borne him.] This is a reason of the womens hope of this childs kindnesse towards *Naomi*. From these words we may learne these things: First, *That there is good hope of childrens loue, which come of louing parents, that they will loue such as their parents haue loued.* Thus the women conclude: and this was a lesson which *Dauid* taught his sonne *Salomon*, 1. Kin. 2. 7. And *Christ* louing those whom his Father loueth, teacheth so much. Let therefore children be thus affected, especially if their parents haue set their loue aright, vpon such as were worthy of loue. Secondly, *That there may be great loue betweene a mother in law, and a daughter in law.* *Ruths* loue towards *Naomi* was very great, shee left her country and kindred for her, Chap. 1. 15, 17. laboured painefully for her, Chap. 2. 18, 23. and *Naomi* was not wanting to seeke the good of *Ruth*, Cha. 3. Let these two bee examples to such: and to make them louing, strive to bee religious, and to feare God, as these did: for Religion will worke, what corrupt nature cannot effect. Let them performe mutuell dueties. And let step-mothers.

mothers know that they step in, to be in stead of naturall mothers, and so let children take them; so will they loue one another. Thirdly, *that true loue cannot be hid*: for it so will expresse it selfe, as other shall take notice of it. These women knew *Ruths* loue: so did *Saul* *Ionathans* to *David*: the people *Christs* loue to *Lazarus*, *Iohn* 11.36. for true loue will breake out as fire. Try true loue by the manifestation thereof. *Ioseph* may hide his a while from his brethren, and *David* from *Abshai*, but it will breake out at length. They therefore but boast vainely of loue; which neuer expresse it. Fourthly, *that true loue in aduersitie, is not lost in prosperity*. *Ruth* is said still to loue *Naomi*; though thus exalted: so did *Hushai* *David*: so did *Iobs* friends, Chap. 2. howsoeuer they erred in iudgement. Let not loue be altered with our estates, nor honours change good conditions, as it doth in too many. Fifthly, *that the loue of a stranger may sometime exceed the loue of many children by nature*. The women preferre *Ruths* loue aboue seuen sonnes, that is, aboue many sonnes. Such God by fauour can supply, what is wanting in them by nature, and make a strangers loue surpasse. Let this be comfort to the distressed.

Verse 16. *And Naomi tooke the child, and laid it in her bosome, and became nurse vnto it.*

THIS verse sheweth the education of the child: by whom, and how.

And Naomi tooke the child. This the old woman

Gen. 45. 1.
2. Sam. 13. 39.
and 14. 1.

man did voluntarily out of her true loue both to the mother and the child. She was in the house of ~~that~~ that great rich man, we here see, and so well provided for in her old age, yet would shee take paines, and not be idle. So wee see, that *she* godly, *though* old, and well provided for, yet will set themselves to labour, and doe something: for they make conscience of their time, not to spend their dayes in idlenesse, which they know to be a foule sinne, and the curse of many. They will labour to be an example vnto others, and to spurre the younger on to take paines. Though they liue of themselves, yet they owe a duety to God, to be doing what they may; & if they liue vpon others, herein they shew their good will, to be as little chargeable as they may, and to be thankfull after their strength and power. Now, this holy woman is herein to bee imitated; and let none thinke that they may be excused to liue idly, either for age, so long as they can take paines; or for that they haue enough to liue vpon, because God giueth none riches to liue a lazis life; but such, euen old persons, should liue either in labour, as Saint Paul willesh the widow of threescore yeres old; or in teaching and instructing others; a blessed exercise for old folke, which will giue them comfort in the end of their dayes.

And laid it in her bosome.] This sheweth her loue, and with what tender affection shee tooke him into her hands. Foure things might moue Naomi thus affectionatly to loue the Babe. First, her loue to the mother, who so exceedingly lo-
ued

1. Tim. 5. 4.
Tit. 2. 3, 4.

ued her. Secondly, her loue to ~~Boaz~~ the father, who had so mercifully dealt with her. Thirdly, her loue to her husband *Elimelech* departed, whose name was raised vp againe by this child, vpon his inheritance. Fourthly, her great hope of ioy and comfort from the child it selfe, as the women foretell in the former verse. Howsoeuer it was, here we may see, that *Parents carry a heartie affection towards their children*: they be in their hearts and bosome: for if this lone was in *Naomi* a mother in law, wee may well conclude it in naturall mothers: which may appeare many waies in their great paines and care in nursing them, and in bringing them vp; in their griefe and sorrow, when their children are any way diseased, as we may see by the teares of the father, and cry of the mother, which *Marke* and *Matthew* make mention of. In their kind imbracing of them, as here, and as did the father of the prodigall sonne. In their great ioy to heare of their well-fare, as *Iacob* did reioyce to heare of *Ioseph*. In their easie natures soone reconciled to their children, when they humble themselues before them, as wee see in *Dauid* to *Abisalom*, and the father of the prodigall sonne. Lastly, in their great lamentation at the death of their children, as *Dauid* did for *Abisalom*, though a most vnnaturall sonne; and the widdow which followed her sonne to the Graue, which Christ raised vp to life againe. No other reason can bee giuen, but that naturall and inbred loue to children in parents, else some children are so hard-fauoured, and

Marke 9. 24. &c
7. 25.
Mat. 15. 22.

Gen. 45. 27, 28

and ill conditioned, as parents could not so loue them, but onely for that they bee their children. Let children hence learne to bee thankfull to God and their parents, and shew loue to them againe in all obedience.

And became his Nurse.] That is, a helpe in the mothers nursing of it, as by holding it, lulling of it asleepe, giuing of it meat, warming of it, and such like helps for the nourishing of the life of the Babe, and not giuing it sucke, for shee was too old to doe this. Wee may find in Scripture two sorts of Nurses: dry Nurses: such a one was *Rebeccaes*, to helpe to attend on the childe, and to ease the mother somewhat, as *Naomi* doth here; and in helping to nourish and bring vp a child; in this sense a father is called a Nurse. The other sort are milch-Nurses, such as giue suck vnto children, as in Scripture we find onely those to be their mothers, euen them that bare them, to bring them vp also, that as they afforded them the Wombe to beare them, so the breasts likewise to giue their children sucke. *And this is the mothers duty, if possibly shee be able:* not birth, wealth, nicety, nor idlenesse can exempt them from this duty; as it doth a number of wanton Dames, that they may be fitter to follow their lusts. *That mothers are to giue their owne children sucke:* it is apparent by these reasons: the naturall instinct in beasts, teacheth euery other Creature hauing paps, to giue sucke; yea, the Sea-monsters draw out their breasts, and giue sucke to their young ones, saith *Jeremie*: and therefore such as neglect this

Gen. 24. 59.

Num. 11. 12.

Lamen. 4. 3.

this duety, are worse then these beasts; which we hold unkind, if they let not their young ones sucke. It is the principall vse and end of breasts in women, when God sendeth them children, though too many now make them onely stales and bawdes of lust. The Workemanship of God should make them doe this: First, in placing them so high, as in no other creature, euen neighbouring vpon the heart, the Shop of heat, to conuey the blood sooner into the breasts; so as the heart workes for the Infant, to teach mothers to haue affection to this worke. Secondly, so placing them, as the mother is taught in nature to embrace the Infant, to lay it to her brest, the more to worke loue betweene the mother and the Babe. Thirdly, in making them to haue this facultie, to turne blood into milke. And lastly, Gods providing, as soone as the Infant is perfect for birth, milke in the brest for the Infant: so as God and Nature call them to this duety, except any will say that God hath done all this in vaine, and might haue spared this Workemanship. The very name of a brest, *Mamma*, should put them in mind hereof, the first syllable whereof is that which an Infant doth soonest speake, calling the mother *Mam*; as if nature had giuen this first to the Babe, so easily to frame to utter this word, to put the mother in mind of her duety, and to giue it her brest. Againe, God in the worke of nature hath not onely giuen breasts, but heads or nipples for the Infant to sucke the milke out of the breasts; and to helpe it, hath made the skin

*Arist. & Plu-
tarch.*

*Kick in his Oc-
cupo.*

Note this, you
vnnaturall mo-
thers,

skin about the nipples more rugous and rough for the childs tongue to hold by. The Heathen Philosophers, endued but with the light of nature, teach this, and affirme, that the mothers milke implants in children the loue of mothers; yea, mothers loue commonly those children better, which they nurse, than the rest: and reason may bee giuen, because the mother giueth, and the child receiueth, by sucking her breasts, more of her substance, than they which doe not. Children loue their Nurses, we see by experience, and better then their mothers that bare them, so long as they be without iudgemēt to discern, & onely follow nature, for the nourishmēt of life. It is not so naturall, say also these Heathen, to be nursed of another, as of the mother, in whom it is conceived: for differing bodies haue differing temperature, and therefore the taking away of the Infant so soone from the accustomed nourishment in the mother, must needs breed an alteration. A learned man thinkes this to be the cause of the degenerating so much of Great mens sonnes, and of their so little loue to their mothers. It is a token of no great loue to children, when their mothers put them ouer to strangers, it is iust with God, if mothers after find their children ouer-strange to them, being but rather halfe than whole mothers, mothers of necessity, & not of good will: for perforce they bring forth: but it is true loue which maketh a mother to giue sucke: safety to themselues desireth the former, or else to dye with it in the Wombe; but loue onely

onely to the Infant, procureth this latter at their hands. Besides all these reasons, the examples of all the godly women in Scripture teach mothers now this duety. That right honourable *Sarah*, the wife of a most honorable man, and mightie in substance and power, nursed her sonne *Isaac*. Princely *Iob* was nourished by the breasts of her whose wombe did beare him. *Queene Bathshebah* nursed *Salomon*. What shall I speake of holy *Hannah*, the mother also of *Moses*, of *Samsons* mother, and others? The mother of Iesus our Lord and Sauour, whom all doe honour, shee did giue her blessed Babe sucke: all women call her blessed, because shee bare Christ: And was shee not as blessed in giuing him her breasts to sucke? Yes verily. Some good Ladies at this day disdaine not this duety. And what should hinder them? Such persons may giue sucke, and then may deliuer the child ouer to a dry Nurse to attend it, in all other things, which helpe the poore cannot haue. Lastly, as there is a blessing of the Wombe to bring forth, so of the breasts to giue sucke: and the dry breasts and barren wombe haue beene taken for a curse. Let mothers therefore take knowledge of these things, to presse them to this duety of nursing their owne bowels, that in giuing still of their owne substance, they might the more worke loue in their children towards them. Their excuses are idle, & are of no force against these reasons: for true motherly loue is seene in nursing: for lust brings to conceiue, necessity forceth to bring forth, but onely true

Gen. 21. 7.

Iob 3. 12.

Cant. 8. 1.

1. Sam. 2. 23.

Exod. 1.

Iudg. 13. 43.

Luk. 11. 27.

Gen. 49 25.

Hosea 9. 14.

true and naturall loue causeth a mother to nurse her child.

Verse 17. *And the women her Neighbours gaue it a name, saying, There is a sonne borne to Naomi: and they called his name Obed; he is the Father of Iesse, the Father of Dauid.*

HERE is the naming of the child, which was borne of *Ruth*: where note who named it, the reason, the name thereof, and what he came to be, shewed in his honorable and royall posterity in his Sonne and Grand-child.

And the women her Neighbours.] The women here are those before in verse 14. very godly and religious, as appeareth by many things before spoken off. These godly women were *Naomi* and *Ruths* Neighbours, such as dwelt together with them, as the word signifieth. Here may be noted *who be fittest to be called to such busineses*, the honest Neighbours, and Kinsfolke, as was at the birth and Circumcision of *Iohn Baptist*: for kinsfolke they expect it, and haue therein an interest and cause of reioycing in the increase of their lineage, and therefore may not be carelessly neglected: and Neighbours are to be called, as those which be nigh at hand and helpfull at need, who being neere, are better, as *Salomon* saith, then a brother farre off. But here obserue farther what manner of Neighbours they were, which these godly women had, euen such as themselves: for *godly women delight to haue about them such as themselves*:

themselves : for the wicked and they cannot accord; they haue differing heads and hearts; ouer the one, God ruleth; ouer the other, Satan; the one is regenerate in heart, the other vnregenerate, and therefore cannot but iarre in word and deed, the one being an abomination to the other, as *Salomon* speaketh. But the godly hauing one head, *Iesus Christ*, and one heart, they will reape benefit one of another; by instructing, admonishing, comforting and praying one for another. Therefore to shew your selues godly, bee yee delighted to haue them about you.

Prou. 29.
Act. 4.

And gaue it a name.] It is said, the women gaue it : we finde that sometime the Fathers gaue the name, as *Abraham* to his sonne whom hee called *Isaac*; Mothers often, as we may see in *Leah* and *Rachel*; so kinsfolke now and then, as wee may note out of *Luke*, chapter 1. 58, 59. And here in *Ruth* the Neighbours gaue it, yea, sometime a stranger named the child vpon iust occasion, as *Pharaoes* daughter did giue the name of *Moses* to him, which the Parents did not alter; so as it seemeth, this was not strictly stood vpon, though most commonly the Parents gaue the name. If any here aske concerning the time when children were named? I finde that it was sometime at the birth of the Infant, so *Rachel* and the wife of *Phineas* gaue their children names vpon their departure; but being in such cases, it seemeth not to be ordinary; it may be thought, to be vsually at the time when the child was circumci-

Gen. 29. & 30.

Gen. 35. 18.
1. Sam. 4. 21.

Gen. 21. 4.
Luke 1. 59.

fed, as we may perceiue at the naming of *Iaac*, and *Iohn* the Baptist. And thus doe wee giue names at the baptizing of Infants, that as they did, so we may put children in minde of the Covenant made in Baptisme, of their badge of Christianity, and of their ingrafting into Christ, and how they were admitted as Gods children, into the household of faith, and as heires of the Kingdome of Heauen.

Esaï. 9. 6.
Luk. 2. 11.

There is a Sonne borne to Naomi.] That is, for the good and comfort of *Naomi*, as is before shewed out of the fifteenth verse, and as may bee gathered by the like phrase elsewhere. So as in these words is a reason of the name which they gaue vnto the child. Whence note, that *the godly in ancient time gaue names not by hap-hazard, but as good reason did leade them thereunto*; for they gaue names in obedience to Gods commandement, who appoynted sometimes names vnto children; to knowe also whence they were, and whence taken. Thus *Adam* was so called of the matter whereof his body was made; so *Moses* of the place whence he was taken. Some had a name from their miserable estate and condition, as *Enosh*; some, to call to remembrance some fauours of God: thus *Simeon* was so called of his Mother *Leah*; and *Ioseph* for the like reason called his sonnes, *Manasses* and *Ephraim*. Sometime names were given from some thing which fell out at the birth; hence *Pharez* had his name, and *Ichabod* his. Some were named so from that which should come to passe afterwards, as *Salomon*.

Gen. 17. 19. &
21. 3.
Luk. 1. 13.

Gen. 29. & 41.
51. 52.

Gen. 38. 29.
1. Sam. 4.

man was, for that in his daies should be rest and peace. Some had their names from some things to be effected and done by them, so was our Lord called *Iesus*, because hee should saue his people from their sinnes. Besides these inducements to impose a name, they did sometime call them after their Ancestors, to keepe them in remembrance. We must learne to imitate the holy men of God in these things; to expresse our own graces, or to teach our children some duties, or to call to minde the workes of God, or to remember holy men and women to imitate their vertues. And we may not thinke this to be too precise a practice, seeing Gods wisdom interposed it selfe sometime, both in giuing names, and in changing of names; and the reuerence due to the holy Sacrament administred, aduise vs to a due consideration hereof in honor of the Sacrament. And a good name may call sometimes a man to the remembrance of his duty. I knowe that a name maketh not a man good: for some haue good names, but their conditions starke naught: yet a good name may sometime occasion a man to thinke of goodnesse; and howsoeuer the party so named doth make no vse of it, yet it is commendable in the imposers thereof, who imitate the example of godly men in the old time, the Saints also in the Primitiue Church, and the godly-disposed at this day. Which reprocueth such as giue names idly without sense or reason, ridiculous names, Heathenish rather then Christian, and some

1. Chron. 22. 9.

Mat. 9.

Luk. 1. 59, 61.

such names as bee very prophane. But of this thus much.

And they called his name Obed.] That is, as they gaue him his name, so thus was hee called: which words may imply, that the name once giuen, was with authority confirmed so, as the Infant was commonly so called without alteration: neither were euer any names altered, but vpon some extraordinary occasion; for to suffer a change thereof, is either folly, or worse, if good and honest causes moue not thereunto.

Obed.] This signifieth *seruing*, because hee should serue as a comforter to old *Naomi*, as the women said, verse 15. which is the reason of this name; to teach him, and also all *Children* their *duetie*, which is this, *to labour to be a comfort vnto their Parents*: of which before in verse 15. Now this they shall doe, if they liue in obedience to their Parents, with feare to offend, yeelding euer to bee ruled by them: if they seeke to imitate their Parents vertues, and to follow them in all good things: if they frame their courses to godlinesse, struiuing to haue an Heauenly Father also for their guide and direction: if they settle themselves to a good course of life, to liue within some honest calling, either in the Church or Common-wealth: if lastly, they liue in mutuall loue one with another, like *Iobs* children. These things will comfort Parents; which therefore let children labour for; let them bee *Obeds*, *seruing* thus to their comforts; let them bee

Isaacs,

Isaacs, to make their Parents to laugh for ioy; and not *Benonies*, Sonnes of sorrow, like *Gains*, *Esaus* and *Absaloms*, wicked, prophane and vnnaturall.

Note here one thing more, before I come to the next words, how that this child is not called either *Elimelech* or *Mablon*, and yet was he giuen to raise vp the name of the dead vpon his inheritance, that might not be cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place; and for this end did *Boaz* marry *Ruth*. Whence therefore we may perceiue, that the preservation of the name of the dead stood not in anothers bearing of his name, so to be called, as he was; but rather in the issue having a right to the inheritance and inioying of it, that it might not bee alienated from the kindred and stocke of the dead: which being so, sheweth the grosse folly and wrong which some shew to their neere blood, in disinheriting daughters, and passing their inheritance vnto meere strangers for a very bare name; as if that were to hold vp their name, when oftentimes it commeth to passe, that such sell away the inheritance, and so roote out their name, which is better kept by continuing an inheritance in their blood and bowels, then by the sound of a word vpon the person of a stranger: this folly we see by examples to be condemned and cursed before our eyes, in not a few.

[*Hee is the Father of Iesse, the Father of Dauid.*]

These words are added to shew, first, who this

Verse 10.

Obed was, or rather what a one he came to be in his posteritie, euen very honorable and of high renoune. Here wee see, that as *Ancestors may grace posteritie, so honorable offspring may grace Ancestors and forefathers.* Againe, by these words we vnderstand when this Story was written, euen in the daies of *Dauid*, and that also when he was chosen of God from his brethren; for else *Iesse* his eldest sonne should haue been named, and not *Dauid*, who was the seuenth and youngest sonne of his Father. Thirdly, these words shew whereto this History tendeth, to bring vs vnto *Dauid*, that sweet singer of Israel, the chiefe type of *Iesus Christ*, the Sauour not onely of the Iewes, but likewise of the Gentiles, of whom he was pleased to come, to be their Sauour also, as it appeareth to vs at this day, blessed be God for euer. Amen.

Verse 18. *Now these are the generations of Pharez; Pharez begat Ram.*

HERE is the last part of this booke, and the conclusion of this chapter, containing a genealogie from *Pharez* to *Dauid*, ten generations, as they be reckoned in order, in this and the rest of the verses from the father to the sonne, and from the sonne to the end of the tenth generation. The occasion of this genealogie was from the last words of the former verse, speaking of *Obeds* being father to *Iesse*, and Grand-father to *Dauid*; and to shew this, the holy Ghost beginneth

neth a genealogie from before *Obeds* time, in seuen of his Ancestors, and descended to *David* his Grand-child.

Now these are the generations.] Vsually the genealogies of the godly are recorded, but sometime the generation of the wicked, as of *Ismael* and *Esan*, are set downe; not so much for their sakes, as to shew the truth of Gods promises made to the faithfull concerning some of them: or to shew some wicked instruments in their posteritie, as in the genealogie of *Cain*. The genealogie of the godly is set downe for these ends. First, to shew how God registreth vp his people in a booke of remembrance, as being precious in his eyes. Secondly, to shew how hee hath had from time to time thorowout all ages, a race of righteous people, a peculiar generation to himselfe, in despite of Satans malice and all his bloody instruments. Thirdly, for helpe to Chronologie, as may bee seene in Gen. 5. from the liues of the Patriarkes. Fourthly, to shew the descent from the first *Adam* to the second, as appeareth in the Euangelists; where *Matthew* intitlith his first Chapter, the booke of the Generation of Iesus Christ, from *Abraham* to *Ioseph*, and then *Luke* from *Ioseph* to *Adam*. This genealogie here in *Ruth* is, to teach the truth of *Jacobs* prophecie, concerning Christs comming of the Tribe of *Iudah*, for here it beginneth at *Pharez* *Iudahs* sonne, and descendeth to *David*, the royall Prophet and type of Christ: Also to shew why the house of *Pharez* was so extolled in verse 12.

Gen. 25. 13 &
36. 9. & 21. 13.
& 4. 17, 18, 19.

Mat. I.
Luk. 3.

by the Elders and people: and thirdly, to let vs know for what end this Story was written, not to praise and set out the vertues of a couple of poore women; but to shew from whom *Dauid* came, the figure of Christ, euen of *Ruth*, a Gentile, a Moabiteffe. Lastly, this may bee, to shew the efficacie of the prayer of the people at *Boaz* marriage, wishing by this seede *Obed* his house to bee as famous as *Iudahs* house was by *Pharez*, as it was indeed. For as *Nahshon* and *Salmon*, Princes came of him, so of this *Obed* came *Iesse* and *Dauid*, and so a royall posteritie.

Of Pharez.] The Catalogue beginneth here, and from this man, though misbegotten incestuously, the honour of the families is fetched; for so in truth it was, the Lord making *Pharez* renowned in his posterity: whence not, First, that the *holy Writers are without partialitie*, they write as things be; they omit not for feare of disgrace that which is true, and ought to bee set downe; they will not spare any, friend, foe, farre off, nor neere, no not themselues; *Moses* will write his owne faults, his Wiues, his Brother *Aarons* and *Miriam*s; *Samuel* will not slip ouer his sonnes miscarriage; nor *Ionah* his owne rebellion against God, and his peeuissh bragging with him; *Ieremie* will record his owne impatience, and Saint *Paul* his bloody rage against the Saints: for indeed they are led by a better Spirit, then that of the world; they also cast off selfe-loue, and they prefer the truth & Gods glorie

*Nam quis nescit,
primū esse histo-
ria legē, ne quid
falsū dicere aude-
at, deinde ne*

rie aboute all : which may perswade vs to the reading of these holy Histories full of varieties, and yet truthe not to bee found in any writings of men. And this should teach such as vndertake to write Stories, to deale truely, without fabling, and to auoide partiall relations, that wee may reade true Histories, and not fictions and falsehoods, to the deceiuing of the posteritie, which should bee thereby instructed. Secondly, that *men hold themselves honored to come of such as haue gained honour in the world, though otherwise stained in their birth* : for so here it is accounted honorable to come of *Pharez*, as many with vs doe ; to come but into this Iland, which *William the Conquerour* obtained, how base so euer he was by his birth : for outward honour and glory procureth estimation, and becloudeth birth so, as that no notice is taken thereof. Now, if outward honour effect this, with what honour may we thinke our selues honoured, when God, the Emperor of Heauen and earth, is willing to acknowledge vs to bee borne of him, and to bee called his Sonnes? But of this, few glory, because it is onely spiritually discerned, and for that such as bee so honoured with God, finde here many crosses, and so are in contempt with the worldly-minded.

Now, in handling the rest of the names, I will shew you out of them, that as one naturally begets another ; so the Elect of God are to be qualified, one grace, as it were, producing another. The first in this naturall generation is *Pharez*, which

*quid veri non
audcat, ne qua
suspicio gratie
sit in scribendo,
ne qua simulta-
tis? Cic. de Orat.
lib. 2.
Vide Iosephum,
Antiq. lib. 16. ca.
11. ubi merito
culpat Nichol.
Damaseni histo-
riam, Herodis
res falsis laudib.
ornantem.*

2. Cor. 6. 17.

Eph. 5. 11.

Verse 19.

Gen. 46. 26.

Deut. 32. 10.
Zach. 2. 8.

which signifieth *separate*: so in the supernaturall worke of Regeneration, the Elect must bee first *Pharez*, separate by their effectuall calling by the Word, and by the holy Spirit in their conuersation from the vaine world; for such are the Children of God, and such ought they to bee, as the Apostle exhorteth, else wee bee not of this spirituall Regeneration. Such then as are companions with wicked, and so liue, they are no *Pharezes*, and so none of Christs line.

Pharez begate Hezron.] So is it plaine, Gen. 46. 12. Matth. 1. 3. 1. Chron. 2. 5. who went downe with *Iacob* into Egypt, contrary to the opinion of some Popish writers: the name signifieth, *in the midst of gladnesse*; and such bee the Elect, after they become *Pharezes*, they must needs be *Hezrons*, full of ioy, when they feele the benefit of their separation, they are a glad people, euen as the Israelites separated from the Egyptians and their heauy bondage.

Hezron begate Ram.] 1. Chron. 2. 9. Matth. 1. This *Ram* or *Aram* was not *Hezrons* first borne, but *Ierahmeel*; to giue vs to know, that the Lord tyed not himselfe to the first borne, but he chose sometime the second, as here, and sometime the youngest, as *Dauid*: and so he doth at this day; which is the cause of the difference of Children from one Father and one Mother, hauing the same education, some doing well, other some ill. The name signifieth *high*: for so are the Elect with God, and being once *Hezrons*, ioyfull in the

the waies of God, they seeke and set their mindes on things aboue, as the Apostle exhorts all risen with Christ to doe. They be not base-minded, to pore vpon the world, as Earth-wormes, but are high-minded towards God and things aboue; they are of a generous spirit, not suffering the things below to tread downe their affections, and to draw them from God.

Col.3.4.

Ram begate Aminadab.] 1.Chro.2.10.Matth.1. He was Father in law to *Aaron*, who married his daughter *Elshebah*; this name signifieth *my people is noble, or free*, and so are the Elect: for hauing attain'd to this height, that they become *Rams*, or *Arams*, they free themselves from the world, as far as it hindereth them from setting their minds on things aboue.

Exod.6.23.

And Aminadab begate Nahshon.] 1.Chron.2. Matth.1. Who was brother in law to *Aaron*, the head and Prince of the Tribe of *Judah*; which host consisted of 74600. valiant men, the first Standerd. This first offered to the dedication of the Altar; *For the greatest should be the forwardest to Gods seruice, and to aduance Religion.* This also first set forward with his charge towards *Canaan*: so should the greatest with their families set forward to Heauen. This signifieth *experiment or triall*; for the Elect of God hauing gotten to bee *Aminadabs*, and become free, they taste of the Lords goodnesse, and can say with *Dauid*; *Come and see what the Lord hath done for my soule.* They keepe in remembrance the kindnesse

Verse 20.

Num.1.7. & 2. 3. and 7.12.

Num.10.14.

nesse of the Lord, and can speake of his noble acts.

And Nahshon begate Salmon,] 1. Chro. 2. 11. where he is called *Salma*: he married *Rahab*, Mat. 1. 5. Thus in the Line of Christ are brought in Gentiles, for our comfort, of whom he came, as well as of the Jewes; and is our kinsman, as well as theirs. This signifieth *peaceable*, and so are the Elect: for after they become *Nahshons*, experienced in Gods goodnesse, they have a peaceable conscience, they have a quiet minde, without murmuring, without doubting, without gaine-saying the will of God in any thing, which may happen, though it crosse them in this world neuer so much, they bee peaceable also towards others, because the wisdom from aboue, with which they are indued, is peaceable.

Iames 3. 17.

Verse 21.

And Salmon begate Boaz,] 1. Chron. 2. 11. of whom I have spoken before. It signifieth *in strength*: for when the Elect are *Salmons*, that they finde inward peace with God, and that they know God to bee with them, then they say to their soules, as the Angell to *Gideon*, Goe in this thy strength: for in the Lord they are valiant, and by his helpe may doe worthily, being confident in God.

And Boaz begate Obed,] 1. Chron. 2. Mat. 1. Of this also before. It signifieth *seruing*: such are the Lords Elect, they are his seruants: for when God hath made them *Boazes*, and put strength of grace into their hearts to withstand their spirituall

tuall aduersaries, they wil become obediēt *Obeds.*

And Obed begate Iesse,] 1. Chron. 2. 13. Mat. 1. who dwelt at Bethlehem, and was an ancient man in the dayes of *Saul*. This signifieth a *gift or offering*: and such bee all true *Obeds*, when the elect become seruiceable and obedient, the ioy they feele in the Lords seruice, maketh them *Iesses*, euen to offer themselues to God, as holy and acceptable sacrifices.

Verse 22.

1. Sam. 16. 1.

Rom. 12. 1

And Iesse begate Dauid,] 1. Chron. 2. 13, 15. Mat. 1. Of this Kingly Prophet and propheticall King, I might speake more at large, then might seeme sutable to this brieife exposition: I therefore referre you to the Bookes of *Samuel*, and the first of the Kings, and the first of the Chronicles, and to the Booke of *Psalmes*, which liuely set out this holy man, a man after the Lords owne heart. His name signifieth *beloued*: and such are the Lords Elect; and they may know themselues to be so, God witnessing his loue to them: for when they bee once *Pharez*, separated from the vaine world; *Hezrons*, ioyfull and glad in this their separation; *Rams*, lifted vp in mind to heauenly things; *Aminadabs*, a free people from spirituall thraldome, hauing gotten the Spirit of Adoption; *Nahshons*, experienced in Gods loue; *Salmons*, peaceable; and *Boazes*, going on in this their strength; and *Obeds*, obedient; and that freely, as *Iesses*: what doubt is there, but that they bee *Dauids*, euen beloued of God?

To conclude this Chapter, and so this whole History, we may here see, how *from a meane estate,*
some

1. Sam. 2. 8.
Psal. 75. 6, 7. &
113. 7.
Daniel. 4. 17.

*some can arise to great honour: as Ruth from glean-
ing, to be the wife of Boaz, and the Grand-mo-
ther of a King and Prophet. Thus poore Morde-
cai was exalted, and that on a suddaine, from
sack-cloth into silken Robes fit for a King; from
feare and danger of death, to great honor, and to
be seared. And thus came Ioseph from a prison, to
be a Prince in Egypt; and David from keeping
sheepe, to bee the King of Israel: all which is the
worke of God, as Hannah singeth, David publish-
eth, and Daniel teacheth. It is easie with the
Lord, suddainely to make a poore man rich, and
to exalt him to honour. And therefore let such
as be low, not enuie the aduancement of others
lifted vp; it is of God; and let them not repine,
nor murmur to see themselves neglected: for if
God held it good for such, and for his glory, to
be lifted vp, as he can do it: so verily he would do
it; as well as he doth others: for God respecteth
no person, but doth what hee pleaseth in heaven
and in earth, & what is most for his glory, though
we iudge, perhaps, otherwise. Another thing may
wee note for the comfort of the godly, That great
is the reward of Religion. Ruth was of the Lord
mercifully rewarded, as we haue heard; so was Ra-
hab by faith preserued, and all with her, brought
from among cursed Canaanites, to bee among
the Israelites; yea, to become the wife of Salmon
a Prince in Israel: and lastly, to be vouchsafed this
mercy, to bee recorded with the faithfull in the
Catalogue of the most Renowned, yea, and to
be mentioned with Abraham, for her good works,
the*

Heb. 11.

the fruit of true faith. What got *David* for his vpright heart, though he seemed to be neglected of his parents, and sent to keepe sheepe, and not called to the Feast, till *Samuel* cauled him to bee sent for? Was not hee for all that, esteemed of God, & cholen before all his brethren? The Lord will not let goodnesse be vnrewarded: for godlinesse hath the promise of this life, and of the Life to come. And in this, let all that truly feare God, comfort themselves, and looke vp to the recompence of the reward, which in due time they shall receiue to the full, if they faint not.

Blessed be God, and his Name be
praised for euermore.

Amen.

F I N I S.

the fruit of righteousness. What good shall it do him
 upright heart, though he seemed to be neglected
 of his parents, and sent to keep sheep, and not
 called to the Field, till Jesus called him to be
 a laborer? Was not he for all that esteemed of
 God & chosen before all his children? The Lord
 will not let good men be unrewarded: for god-
 liness hath the promise of this life, and of the
 life to come. And in this, let all that truly love
 God, comfort themselves, and look up to the
 recompence of the reward, which in due time
 they shall receive to the full, if they faint not.

Blessed be God, and his Name be

praised for evermore.

Amen.

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